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An investigation of dominant ideologies operating within the text historia by Australian playwright Noëlle Janaczewska

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**AN INVESTIGATION OF DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES OPERATING WITHIN
THE TEXT 'HISTORIA' BY AUSTRALIAN PLAYWRIGHT
NOËLLE JANACZEWSKA**

by

Nicole G. Kelly

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The 'reality' of contemporary Australia is based upon hegemonic perceptions of society, which categorise and classify subjects and groups. These perceptions are based upon dominant ideologies that make sense of and order the world in a particular way. Where 'minority' groups are concerned, their experience, their way of life and their way of 'being' is seen to deviate from the hegemonic perception; they don't fit into the dominant ideology and are therefore constituted as 'different', which through Western polarisation sees them marginalised as the 'Other' seen as somehow more deviant than those who fit the dominant ideology.

Noëlle Janaczewska's play *Historia* (1996), presents us with these minority groups, which she juxtaposes with the dominant ideologies. Through an exegesis which questions notions of class, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, this thesis explores the ways in which these groups are justified as being 'Other', how they are not seen and how they are unable to "be" at all.

Historia presents four characters, two historical gay men from Poland and two contemporary Australian lesbian women, one of whom is a second-generation immigrant from Poland. Thus, we are endowed with the oppressed and marginalised groups of (if we are to put it in dominant ideological terms) man/woman

heterosexual/homosexual, coloniser/colonised, capitalists/proletarians. These groups therefore share multiple oppressions. Womanhood is an oppression made most obvious through the feminist movement, homosexuality through the gay and now 'queer' liberation movement, the ethnic position through post-colonialism, and the class structures of society through conflict theories such as Marxism. Through each of these discourses, this thesis will position the subject in relation to the foregoing theoretical perspectives.

As the characters in the play *Historia* encounter biases associated with immigration and the White Australia Policy involving assimilation, integration and later multiculturalism; lack of employment or work in devalued sectors of the economy; homosexuality and the classification that makes them 'deviant' and 'superficial' 'Others'; and the accompaniment of womanhood which involves biases in the home, family and economy – we are taken on a journey of oppression to expose the dominant ideologies that maintain the capitalist and patriarchal hegemonies in Australia.

Janaczewska alters these perceptions of dominant ideologies. Through the medium of the theatre as a political and an ideological force, she adopts methods of dramaturgy that expose and interrogate the dominant perceptions of society. By placing two women on a patriarchally dominated stage Janaczewska overrides the hegemonic beliefs in society allowing women not only a voice but also a physical space in which to tell of their experiences. Through devices ranging from the deviation of Aristotelian theatricality, to the use of Brecht's alienation effect for feminist purposes, Janaczewska structures and represents the narrative of *Historia* through an alternative form that deconstructs and exemplifies 'reality' as a construct, capable of change through the space of the theatre.

This thesis does not attempt to provide answers or solutions to these oppressions or the mechanisms that function as power relations within any one society but, rather, it exemplifies the complexities society attempts to seal over. In so doing it reveals fragmented and transient identities rather than a unified hegemony within the Australian context.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;*
- ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or*
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Nicoll Kelly 

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INTRODUCTION

Noëlle Janaczewska's play *Historia* (1996) can be seen to explore the ideological discourses that maintain the dominant hegemonies of a patriarchal and capitalist society. This thesis examines how the material conditions of social experience inform categories of 'being.' Kristeva does not see the oppression of 'being' a woman as "different in principle from that of other marginalised or exploited groups" (Selden & Widdowson, 1993, p. 227). For Kristeva the 'being' of 'woman' remains a myth – something outside of visible reality. She writes "A woman cannot "be," it is something which does not even belong in the order of *being*" (cited in Dolan, 1988, p. 99). Sartre (1973) proposes that while man [sic] does exist "he [sic] is born into a kind of void (*le néant*)" (Cuddon, 1992, p. 316). Thus, the 'Woman' exists – this is the human reality, however she does not exist in 'essence' until such time as she is recognised as an active participant. The female experience of 'being' both within society and history and the materiality of recollection, therefore, become my point of departure.

'Woman' has traditionally been represented by a form of metonymic differentiation that reproduces her oppression by excluding her from history. The being of 'woman' has been left out of history because the male domain of literature saw women's stories as marginal to the dominant ideologies of a capitalist and patriarchal discourse. This investigation is not a new phenomenon; rather, the need for the telling of 'her' story must be credited as the major task of the women's movement emerging from second-wave feminism, a task to be filled in the realm of literature and for this investigation,

particularly in the realm of the theatre. Having been excluded from and written out of history by male theory, the position of 'being' for 'woman' sees her simultaneously in history and not in history. Irigaray (1985) describes 'Woman', as the "sex which is not one." Thus, women have traditionally remained 'invisible' to the dominant ideologies of representation within society.

Janaczewska's title, *Historia*, suggests that the female story has always been there. By using the feminine Latin noun instead of the English 'history,' Janaczewska implies that story-telling about women and by women has not 'naturally' been left out of history, but rather the motivation has come from the 'necessary' maintenance of an accepted dominance by the patriarchal and capitalist hegemonies. The notion 'story' suggests a narrative of past events or a sequence of events, which has been largely dominated by an Aristotelian discourse of coherency, linearity and plot-driven necessity. This enforces the development of a narrative that reaches a climax. Hence, this traditional dramaturgical approach sees the telling of the story as patriarchally driven and owned by the 'Grand' narrative.

Janaczewska's title, *Historia*, places the 'story' between the masculine 'his' and the feminine 'a', thus implying a re-writing of 'woman' into the patriarchal imperative of dominance. As the genders circle around the notion of 'story' Janaczewska doesn't abandon or deny the masculine presence, but rather makes use of its materiality to deconstruct the dominant and naturalised experience. Janaczewska may concede that history began with the patriarchal 'Adam' in the re-telling of 'his'tory, but may also suggest in the ending 'a' that history ends with 'Eve' and the telling of 'her' story.

Janaczewska explores the hierarchical structure of society, a structure that orders experience in a particular way. This is exemplified through the characters' names where the two male characters, the Artist and the Anthropologist are designated by the first letter of the alphabet "A", while the two female characters Zosia and Zoe complete the ordering of language through their "Z", the final letter. Similarly, *Historia's* use of the Do-re-mi song that begins and ends with 'Do – a deer, a female deer,' suggests a reinforcement that the hierarchy previously ordered by the patriarchy is now being re-written by the female into its history.

Through the representation of repressed experiences, chapter one explores the hegemony of an Anglo-celtic Australia, which through *Historia* gives voice to the exploitative mechanisms encountered by immigrants. The representation of ethnicity in any colonised culture has been homogenised and left invisible. As immigrants remain outside the dominant group their experience of 'being' in social life has been left out of history. My focus here turns to those Polish immigrants to Australia after World War II, which saw refugee groups confronted firstly with official policies of integration and later assimilation. Thus during this period, discrimination and lack of communication forced immigrants into socially devalued employment and consequently they became subjected to lower wages. Therefore the immigrant-ethnic 'experience' constituted through unequal power relationships, saw the immigrant population as the working class. Like the relationship of coloniser/colonised, the immigrant position, which largely formed the working class of western Sydney, was reinforced, based upon situations of difference and subordination.

Chapter two examines the processes which place the minority 'homosexual' group as deviant and somehow innately unnatural. Through reference to *Historia* this section explores the assumption of a heterosexual 'normative' model, which reveals its 'creation' through what Ingraham (1997) terms "the heterosexual imaginary". This is maintained by institutions such as the Church and by capitalist reinforcement of the nuclear family which positions motherhood and the socialisation process as 'natural' and 'innate'. The human species is thus gendered into socially accepted masculine and feminine bodies, denying the presence and visibility of any 'queer' behaviour. The homosexual 'experience' has also been silenced through difference and subordination, which leaves the story of the homosexual or sexually different body 'in the closet.' Denied a voice, the 'queer' relationship remains silenced, and through this seemingly 'natural' subordination, the positioning of the homosexual continues to be categorised as licentious.

Chapter three posits the corporeal female body as the site of agency within *Historia*. The female body, placed on the traditionally male – dominated stage and subjugated to the mind/body dichotomy, has been separated, silenced and subordinated. In *Historia*, the theatricality of performance becomes inherently political and thus able to challenge these previously accepted ideologies of gender, along with those of sexuality, ethnicity and class. The theatre 'space' is here explored as a political construct between the performer and audience, where the traditionally organised social space becomes a blackened auditorium with a fictitious fourth wall, inviting the positioning of the female body as an object of the male gaze. Male desire is projected upon the woman, who cannot see but is forever seen (Foucault, 1992). Through representation the stage

becomes an ideological force that participates in creating and maintaining, or otherwise deconstructing and subverting, these dominant social arrangements.

Through the mode of the theatre Janaczewska's *Historia* interrogates these social arrangements. *Historia* successfully challenges the repressive mechanisms associated with marginalised groups such as 'woman', the working class and the homosexual. Thus, Janaczewska re-orders experience by deconstructing the hegemonies of contemporary Australia through giving these marginalised groups a voice, hence, *Historia* re-writes these subject positions within female experience into (his) story.

CHAPTER ONE

CLASS STRUCTURES AND THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

I am mostly interested in the kind of reality of contemporary Australia and the reality of urban Australia . . . and that reality is culturally diverse. (Janaczewska, personal communication, June 13, 1998)

Through a materialist feminist critique we can see how the characters represented in Janaczewska's *Historia* occupy the materiality of their historical and ethnic roots and their working-class background through hegemonic beliefs in Australian society. Immigration to Australia provided for many an opportunity to escape poverty, famine, war and political upheaval. However, the legacy of assimilation in the 1960s and the shift to integration in the 1970s stifled immigrant cultures. Janaczewska exemplifies this experience through Polish-Australian identities. In an Australian cultural and literary milieu, which tends to marginalise the colonised, Janaczewska explores and juxtaposes the experience of displacement in a contemporary Australian ethnicity. Brecht's theories of epic theatre and alienation effect offer playwrights like Janaczewska a way to examine the material conditions that inform ethnicity, gender, and other socioeconomic factors like class. Similarly, the material referents of cultural artefacts form the basis of a social reality and expose the social, historical and political ideologies of a capitalist society that often oppresses marginal groups, like women and immigrants.

In 1901, the Immigration Restriction Act, more commonly known as the White Australia Policy, was enforced in Australia to keep out non-European immigrants and, until 1947, even European settlers were few. This policy is explored in Janaczewska's *The History of Water/huyền thoại một giòng nu'ò'c* (1995) by the character Hà who "realises that she carries a weight of representation as a migrant who has already been pre-packaged in the 'Vietnam' of the Australian imagination" (Gunew, 1995, p. 8). Australians' imagination of the Vietnamese is exemplified in headlines to do with the fear of the foreign – "floods of boat people . . . waves of refugees . . . rivers of blood" (Gunew, 1995, p. 8).

After World War II, Australia's economy boomed, outstripping the national labour pool, and the state demanded immigrant workers. One of the largest postwar refugee groups in Australia was from Poland, or of Polish origin. The 1961 Census showed:

that of a total population of 10.5 million, nearly 841 000 or 8 per cent were now non-British European born. Largest groups were Italian, 228 000; German, 109 000; Greek, 77 000; Polish, 60 000; Yugoslav, 50 000; Hungarian, 30 000; Austrian, 24 000; Latvian, 16 000; Russian, 16 000; and Ukrainian, 14 000. (Australia & Immigration, 1978, p. 22)

This reasonably large proportion of Polish immigrants was a result of improved relations between the two countries during the early period of World War II when Polish and Australian troops fought side by side against a common enemy – Nazi Germany and its Allies.

With a few exceptions, those of Polish origin experienced the longest displacement before migrating to Australia. Their experiences of "subjugation, uncertainty and instability are second only to the experience of the Jews persecuted by the Germans"

(Kunz cited in Sussex & Zubrzycki, 1985, p. 4). Of the Nazi invasion into Poland in 1939, Janaczewska (1996) writes:

overnight we became foreigners. By the end of the week we were displaced persons running for our lives. We ran and ran until we became refugees. We stopped. Caught our breath. And translated ourselves into migrants. (p. 97)

The immigration scheme for displaced persons operated during the years 1947 – 1952. In the wake of the great political upheavals that shook Poland in 1956, 1968 and 1980-81, three smaller waves of refugees and other immigrants followed this (Sussex & Zubrzycki, 1985, p. 3-4). Kaluski (1985, p. 31) reports that between 1947-55 Australia accepted a total of 71, 721 people who had been born in Poland. As a result, a strong Polish community developed in Australia in the 1950s. The considerable number of Polish organisations established exemplified the successful community development of the Polish people (Pakulski, 1985a, p. 91). This is illustrated in *Historia* in descriptions of the Polish club where “among plastic palms and gossip . . . Wujiu Jerzy sells kielbasy and chleb-” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 280). Those of Polish origin came to Australia with varied attitudes and expectations. Sussex and Zubrzycki (1985) write:

while some Poles left tolerable conditions behind them to emigrate [sic] to Australia, many Poles came here to escape from persecution, famine, poverty or war. For these people the refugee mentality was often dominant. (p. 6-7)

These immigrants felt that their immigration to Australia was caused by factors beyond their control and therefore felt not at ease with the dominant Australian ethos.

Immigrant labour also caused many tensions for the Australian-born work force and thus resentment of those immigrants (Pakulski, 1985a, p. 91). Large-scale use of immigrant labour is not an isolated phenomenon; in fact, it has been a feature of most advanced economies since 1945. Castles, Kalantzis, Cope and Morrissey (1988, p. 81)

explain “there is nothing new about this: industrialization involves the concentration of materials, machinery and workers at new sites of production and hence has always involved labour migration.” For the immigrants in Australia initial contact with Trade Unions in 1949 was hostile. This was partly due to the “traditional opposition of the Australian unions to the importation of workers, especially of non-British origin, and their fear of competition from migrants who were ready to work harder for lower wages” (Pakulski, 1985a, p. 90).

In a 1973 national income survey of Australia, Jacobowicz and Buckley found that after allowing for housing costs “12.3 per cent of immigrant units from an NESB [Non-English speaking background] were below the poverty line compared with 6.7 per cent of all adult income units” (Williams & Batrouney, 1998, p. 262-3). Contributing causes for this inequality included the extra expenses immigrants needed to consider, like the cost of supporting elderly parents not eligible for the aged pension; the need to repay debts for their passage to Australia; sending money home to family members; and the costs of setting up a new home. As post-war immigrations increased dramatically, “the ethnic composition of the population transformed” (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope & Morrissey, 1988, p. 11). This is exemplified by Kaino (1995, p. 82) who records “Australia’s ethnic composition is 77.2% persons born in Australia, including 2% Aboriginal Australians and 22.8% population born overseas.” Discrimination, lack of communication and the non-recognition of qualifications forced even highly skilled migrants into manual manufacturing jobs, deployed in socially devalued sectors of the economy. According to Egon Kunz there were “69 Polish medical practitioners in Australia whose profession was not recognised in Australia and who were forced to work mainly in factories” (Kaluski, 1985, p. 110). For materialist feminism, the

dynamics of class positions and the status that attaches to it are central in the formation of all economic, social and cultural institutions. Thus, as labour immigration increased, the size and structure of the working class transformed and the opportunity for upward mobility of Australian-born workers increased. Australian born workers therefore came to constitute the higher strata of society.

In the early history of the Australian capitalist economy emphasis was placed on an 'Australian type'; which typically represented masculinity, masculine friendships and mateship. Women were excluded from these images and were therefore also excluded from the 'Australian type'. While being Australian has often been defined in racist terms it has also "been defined in sexist terms" (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope & Morrissey, 1988, p. 7). For Australian-born women, the Second World War presented opportunities outside of housework, challenging the belief that a woman's place was in the home and "women took over many jobs previously available only to men" (Hennessey, 1993a, p. 51). Burgmann (1993, p. 80) writes "the postwar boom had seen a rapid expansion of employment in manufacturing and service industries, sectors that employed a lot of women." However, as wages create the situation of the worker, lower wages paid to women left them, like many immigrants, without the opportunity for upward mobility. Hence, a paradox exists in that while women were needed by Australian capitalist society, which provided them with a position in the real material base, it simultaneously kept women 'in their place' through lower wages thus confining their roles in the hierarchical structure of labour and most doubling their workload – formal work and housework. During the 1950s and early 1960s another period of change, tension and confusion was experienced by women in Australia because "when

the war ended they were expected to return to the home and resume their natural, not to say patriotic, role of repopulating Australia" (Hennessey, 1993a, p. 51).

Women, like colonised subjects, have been relegated to the position of 'Other'. Not only have they been subordinated by capitalism but also by various forms of patriarchal domination. To a certain degree, women share with colonised cultures the experience of oppression and repression. However, in many instances working class women have claimed the same experience of poverty as those ethnic-Australian women. In May 1974, an Australian study revealed:

That the unemployment rate among immigrant women was 2.5 per cent, the same as that for women born in Australia. However, a much larger share of immigrant women were in the labour force compared with their Australian-born counterparts, with their participation rates being 46.6 per cent and 40.6 per cent respectively. (Williams & Batrouney, 1998, p. 269)

In March 1996, Williams and Batrouney (1998, p. 269) reported that the "unemployment rate for all women was 8.6 per cent, while that for women born overseas had risen to 10.2 per cent overall and 12.6 per cent for those from NES countries." Not only are women as a class oppressed but ethnic women remain consistently double oppressed. This notion of 'double colonisation' – that women in formerly colonised societies were doubly colonised by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies – became a catch phrase of post-colonial discourse in the 1980s.

'Discourse' is a term to which Foucault gave prominence and, for the purpose of this essay, is closely aligned with ideology. Fowler (cited in Hawthorne, 1992, p. 48) defines discourse as, "speech or writing seen from the point of view of the beliefs, values and categories which it embodies; these beliefs constitute a way of looking at the world." Similarly, ideologies are "a set of ideas and beliefs or world view which serve

the interests of powerful groups in society and perpetuate in various ways the subordination of the powerless" (Wearing, 1996, p. 84). This set of beliefs provides a way of seeing, a way of interpreting the world based on our learned and lived experiences. The causal logic underlying a theory of discourse as ideology makes it possible to acknowledge "the systematic operation of social totalities like patriarchy and racism across a range of interrelated material practices" (Hennessey, 1993b, p. xvi).

From the 1940s to the mid 1960s immigrants presented no threat to the maintenance of a homogenous 'British' population within Australia. This was due largely to the assimilation policies imposed upon immigrants. Assimilation meant that all cultures were expected to live the same as all other Australians, they were to merge with the wider Australian population and were not allowed to retain their cultural codes of language or dress. The demand that immigrants assimilate quickly to an 'Australian' culture asserted an ethnocentric superiority over the culture of the immigrant. Within this context "the Australian Poles seemed on the whole to be well liked by the Anglo-Australians of their new homeland" (Sussex & Zubrzycki, 1985, p. 1). The community development of ethnic groups in Australia, particularly the Polish did not arrest this process of social and cultural assimilation because as Pakulski (1985b, p. 171) asserts "this assimilation occurs parallel to the organizational consolidation of the community." The Immigration Restriction Act remained in place until the mid 1960s when both political parties officially abandoned it, at least in name. It was acknowledged that people of non-European origin would now:

be permitted to enter Australia but on the basis of much stricter entry criteria than Europeans and the numbers permitted to enter would be restricted so as to preserve the 'homogeneity' of the population. (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope & Morrissey, 1988, p. 51)

In 1964 the policy of assimilation was abandoned and replaced by one of integration, in which the immigration group became part of society without necessarily losing its separate identity. By 1973, following from Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's plan, multiculturalism was ushered in. By the end of the 1970s multiculturalism had become "not only a new Australian word, but also a full-blown 'ism' and a comprehensive ideology of what Australia was supposed to be and to become" (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope & Morrissey, 1988, p. 4). In *Historia* (Janaczewska, 1997) Zosia reflects upon multiculturalism:

this year, the party is at Ciocia Marysia's and I've been persuaded to go. Inside it's like an ad for multiculturalism. Supposed to make you feel all warm and fuzzy about cultural diversity. (p. 282)

Zosia views this scene with scepticism, the combination of an Australian-Polish identity seems strange as she observes "Oplatek(ritual wafer,) [and] candles on the Christmas tree even though it's hot and sunny outside" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 282). As the celebrations continue around Zosia "The old men start on about-" "#: The old country!" "#: Niech zyje Polska! (Long live Poland!)"¹ (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 282).

Multiculturalism, since its inception as government policy, has ensured a sharp increase in the achievable status and cultural acceptance of the ethnic *middle* classes; however, as Castles et al. (1988) argue:

...the life chances of the ethnic *working* class have been ravaged by unemployment, falling living standards and an accelerating urban crisis in which yesterday's cheap migrant suburbs are becoming rookeries for the middle class and the socially mobile. (p. 66)²

Labour immigrants mostly settled in areas where expanding industries needed them, in industrial suburbs and around cities. As Fincher and Wulff (1998, p. 156) posit, many

¹ #: Represents other voices as taken directly from the script 'Historia' by Janaczewska.

² Gentrification has displaced other groups such as the Aboriginal working class.

poor large families and non-English speaking households reside in industrial suburbs. In New South Wales, the suburbs of outer Western Sydney were one such area. Guppy and Hall (1990) write of their work in the Western suburbs of Sydney:

We have established a parallel with the developing outer urban environment of Western Sydney. It is this environment, among others, in which we have experience as cultural workers. Moreover it is an environment with an extraordinary mix of race, class and culture. It has survived crises of identity and reputation within our most confronting urban landscape. It typifies for us the new multicultural working class community . . ." (p. 21)

In its explanation of class structures *Historia* directly refers to four traditionally working-class suburbs in Western Sydney; Penrith, Westmead, Harris Park and Granville. These outer suburbs of metropolitan areas are often singled out as sites of disadvantage "as something to make sense of" (Guppy & Hall, 1990, p. 22). In *Historia* there is a definite dichotomy and antagonism set up between the Western and Eastern (coastal) suburbs, which reflects the very real history of the two areas.

Survey evidence from the outer Western suburbs of Sydney, collected by the Red Cross from its lengthy work with poor households there, revealed "scarce recreational, medical and hospital facilities and inadequate public transport across the city" (Fincher & Wulff, 1998, p. 146-7). Connie, in Janaczewska's *Kimch'i Connie*, (1998, p. 38) describes life in the Western suburbs of Sydney: "and I'm reaching out from the slow life of the suburbs." This isolation, due to lack of transport and cultural infrastructure is particularly evident in a yearning for the ocean. In *Historia*, the theme of the ocean is juxtaposed with the outer suburban 'West', which is "arid, hot and dusty" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 259). This antagonism is reinforced as Zosia becomes trapped in Ciocia Marysia's Tropicana bathroom. She describes the decor of the bathroom, with its wallpaper, appropriated as a working-class cultural artefact, that brings "the ocean to

Rosedale Avenue, Penrith", as a "turquoise panorama [which] tries to convince you you're at the beach, not cramped inside a suburban bathroom". Later she states "In the family narratives of the wallpaper beach, there are no arguments, no sunburn, no secrets" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 260). For Zoe, her childhood memories of Western Sydney see her in a frequently oppressed state "That's me in the dark; Westbury Road, Westmead" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 266). Later in the text through gaps in childhood memory, both Zosia and Zoe get lost "somewhere around Granville and Harris Park" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 269).

The notion of subscribing to the dominant culture in order to be a part of it reflects the position of downward mobility experienced by the Polish immigrant in *Historia*. For Zoe, who is a working class 'Australian,' the mystification and romanticised notion of ethnicity pervades her life. She craves a sense of belonging, of 'authenticity' in a culture so dominated by superficiality. Zoe states "give me some of that Old World – European – ethnic family stuff – hand made lace – old country tastes – ancient traditions – going back generations" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 279). It is this "ethnic family stuff" that keeps women at home tied to domestic chores like cooking, chores which women have tried to escape through moving to the 'new country.' For Zosia, whose origins are in this "ethnic family stuff", she too is trying to find a sense of belonging, but all she sees is the reality of Australian life.

Zosia: A cluster of fibro houses
 Squatting below the Blue Mountains
 From where, each summer,
 We'd watch bushfires boil in stubborn winds
 Tentacles of new development
 Melt in seas of heat and flames
 And Ciocia Marysia would take me
 And my cousin Wally
 To the cool tiles of the public pool,
 And we'd watch ash falling like confetti

On the hills.
 And I'd imagine tongues of fire
 Licking the pink flesh of the Penrith sky.
 (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 279)

Adopting Marxist notions to the realm of the theatre, Brechtian discourse proves integral to the dramatisation of the complex issues involving production, reproduction and the inequalities maintained throughout history. Brecht abolished the word 'art,' making theatre 'propaganda' – a means of disseminating doctrine, making it *political theatre*. Reinelt (cited in Case, 1990, p. 150) states that political theatre requires the “ability to isolate and manifest certain ideas and relationships that make ideology visible, in contrast with the ideas of realism and naturalism, wherein ideology is hidden or covert.” Brecht developed his theories of epic theatre and the alienation effect to reveal material relations as the basis of social reality. He wanted to describe and expose the social, historical and political ideologies within capitalist society. Brecht's techniques offer contemporary feminists a way to examine the material conditions of gender behaviour and feminist interaction with other socio-political factors such as class (Reinelt 'cited in Case, 1990, p. 150). Gender and class become the object under investigation in a materialist feminist approach. Hennessey and Mohan (1997, p. 187) state “from the beginning, materialist feminism gave priority to the social construction of gender while simultaneously avowing commitment to analysis of gender in its intersection with class.”

From a materialist perspective, women's experiences cannot be understood outside of their specific historical context, which includes a specific type of economic organisation dependent upon the notion of hegemony. Hegemony in the modern sense has its origins in the writings of Antonio Gramsci (1985). Hegemony for Gramsci “expresses the

advantaged position of dominant social groups with respect to discourse" (Fraser, 1992, p. 53). In terms of ideology, hegemony refers to a situation where the dominant political class successfully disseminates ideology through what Wearing (1996, p. 84) calls "the organs of public opinion so thoroughly that no chinks can be perceived." Ideologies, then, are linked together so tightly that a "hegemony is established and the world view of the dominant class becomes 'commonsense' to us all" (Wearing, 1996, p. 84).

These ideologies are maintained through the cultural institutions such as the state, educational organisations and the media, as well as cultural artefacts, history and art. Theatre is an art form expressing the needs, desires and often the oppression felt within a culture. For most of the history of Western patriarchal culture, ownership of property, the public arena, written language and theatre itself have been dominated by men. Women's theatre remained within the 'domestic' or 'private' domain for centuries as women provided drawing room entertainment for family and friends. Within theatre practices the clearest illustration of the division of 'public' and 'private' is in the tradition of the all male stage, where until the late seventeenth century 'woman' was played by male actors in drag, while 'real' women were banned from the stage. However, late nineteenth century theatrical realism created the need for representation through mimesis and women found a place on the stage. Realism is defined by Hartnoll (cited in Tait, 1994, p. 27) as "...dramas which approximated in speech and situation the social and domestic problems of everyday life, played by actors who spoke and moved naturally." Realism's aim to represent a familiar and reassuring impression of the self on the stage allowed women to play out lives decided, written and constructed by male playwrights.

Theatrical realism placed women in what Case (cited in Tait, 1994, p. 28) calls a "prisonhouse of art" up until the late 1970s, when it was recognised that women's experience was not 'natural', "not unmediated, not able to be represented at all apart from the sign systems of the prevailing hegemony; in fact, given cultural inscription, it may not even exist *qua* woman's experience" (Reinelt, 1989, p. 49). Wright (1989, p. 27) states "the theatre which in our time became political before our eyes, had not been apolitical up to then. It had taught us to view the world in the way that the ruling classes wanted it to be viewed." What feminists began to recognise was that the dominant power systems of any society are inscribed in that society's discursive practices, and are not essential truths. Having previously conceptualised discourse as ideology, the theorist can now consider the discursive construction of the subject, 'woman', "across modalities of difference" (Hennessey, 1993b, p. xv).

For many feminists, the realisation of social conditioning and hegemony implied that all people are subjects of and subject to, their culture and discourse. The theory of ideology implicit in the concept of hegemony is critical in the sense that "ideology is no longer thought to be a monolithic determining force, but rather an articulated ensemble of contesting discourses which comes to count as "the way it is" (Hennessey, 1993b, p. 76). This concept of ideology is closely related to Althusser's distinction between Ideology and ideologies. "In any historical moment there are only ideologies; but their circulation is bound to the (re) production of "reality" through the process of hegemonic articulation" (Hennessey, 1993b, p. 76). This therefore underpinned the realisation that 'woman' could not be conceptualised in terms of an idealised universal 'sisterhood' as radical feminism suggested. This was an essentialism that included women of colour, third-world women and working-class women within the same experience. In fact, to

assume women make up a class of their own also obscures those complex relations between upper-, middle-, and working-class women.

Within the theatre the widely used term 'women's theatre' remains a misnomer as the social identity of an essential 'woman' is discursively implied. As Tait (1994, p. 6) asserts "women cannot hope to, or would not, own theatre as such" and the assumption that women share a common social experience means that any theatre about women is taken as relevant to all women. Similarly, 'women's theatre' is often represented as synonymous with 'feminist theatre'. Janaczewska (1987) clarifies 'modern feminist theatre' for us:

by modern I mean from about 1970 onwards, and by feminist theatre I am referring to a form of theatre that incorporates an understanding of the social construction of femaleness and some analysis of the interactions of gender, class and power, and that this awareness is manifest in the content, form, perspective and processes of that theatre. (p. 107)

To assume a discourse outside of this definition is to base feminist knowledge on a presumed universal women's experience which tends to homogenise and essentialise 'woman'. For Barrett, texts and performances are ambiguous and she agrees with Rosalind Coward that women's art is not necessarily feminist, since feminism "is an alignment of political interests and not a shared female experience" (cited in Landry & Maclean, 1993, p. 26). As previously stated, the social construction of 'woman' is therefore never monolithic. When materialist feminists work in the theatre "they must find ways to reshape a material practice that has been used to legitimize and maintain male hegemony" (Kritzer, 1991, p. 7). Therefore, "the possibilities for deconstructing gender on stage held promise for a new feminist theatre which could point out the ideological character of theatrical representation" (Reinelt, 1989, p. 49).

Using Brecht's theories, which attempt to deconstruct the hegemonic society, feminist theatre is able to examine the socially constructed wholeness of the gendered subject. Brecht's theatrical practice explores a socialist-realist discourse. This is a term used by Marxist critics for novels which they hold to "embody or 'reflect' characters and events that accord with the Marxist view that the struggle between economic classes is the essential dynamic of society" (Abrams, 1993, p. 176). Brechtian techniques provide a way to examine the material conditions of gender behaviour and class through a methodology for embedding a materialist critique within the theatrical medium. Brecht's stage design aims to primarily contribute to his alienation effect (V-effect), and to bring about change. Following the innovation of Piscator, Brecht's film projection occurs simultaneously with the action on stage, either contradicting what the actors are saying or reinforcing it. Janaczewska employs many of these techniques to deconstruct notions of tradition through the materiality of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and class. In Janaczewska's *The History of Water/Huyen Thoai Giồng Nùd'c* and *Historia* the use of film projection juxtaposes languages to reveal and to represent a reality that is culturally diverse and not a homogenous unity.

Janaczewska (personal communication, June 13, 1998) writes "often I'm walking down the street . . . and I hear music and voices in different languages . . . There is also something inherently theatrical about the act of translation, it is performative in nature." In *The History of Water/Huyen Thoai Giồng Nùd'c* "slides are projected onto the screen. Vietnam and Australia, English and Vietnamese, slowly dissolving into one another" (Janaczewska, 1995, p. 16-17). The projection screen in this particular play holds a framed window, which is opened by Hà during the performance. This suggests an accessibility to language as Hà plays the role of immigrant but also translator. As

such Kate (the photographer) states of Hà "she moves language. Changes sounds and fashions reality into another image. Takes one language and skims it across the surface of another. Like a stone across a lake" (Janaczewska, 1995, p. 21). However, for Kate:

seeing is believing. So the story goes. So the camera has to be everywhere. It has to travel to the limits of our material lives, to snap up the evidence. Fix reality. Protect us from any sense that the world might be more than what we see. (Janaczewska, 1995, p. 25)

Similarly, the use of projections in *Historia* which juxtapose English and Polish words reveal and subvert this notion of a fixed and illusory reality.

Language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process begins in language. But more than this, cultural control is maintained by the control over language held by the imperial centre. Janaczewska (personal communication, June 13, 1998) writes "I have an interest in exploring language, not necessarily in English but language itself and the power of language." As an element of ideology language "provides the terms by which reality may be constituted; it provides the names by which the world may be 'known' " (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, p. 283). In other words, to name reality is to exert power over it because the dominant language becomes the way in which it is known. Wierzbicka (1985) writes:

every language provides a window for looking at the world. But the glass in this window is not transparent or patternless. On the contrary every window has its own colour and its own design. (p. 187)

For those of Polish origin who immigrated to Australia during the assimilation period, the English language was their expected mode of communication. Conformity to this language remained a tool of power and domination, thus ensuring an elitist identity for Anglo-Australians.

The Polish language – a Western Slavonic tongue of the Indo-European family of languages – has experienced dilution through the historical upheavals of Poland having been replaced it with German and Russian alternately. Williams and Batrouney (1998, p. 263) state “if lack of access to resources is one measure of poverty then absence of language skills or inferior language ability will prevent or restrict access to those resources and thus contribute to poverty.” For the bilingual speakers who switch from one language to another it is not just the form that changes, but also the content. What Janaczewska achieves through these bilingual projections of English and Polish that reveal a ‘reality’ of diversity is the displacement of the colonised through alienation as the audience begins to experience the Polish assimilation pressures and difficulties. The first projection displaces and alienates the audience. “*Email/Europejski(European)/ewolucja(evolution)/ewentualnie(possibly)/erotyczny(ero-
tic)/ewentualnie/exile/eastern/Europe/Elsie/e-mail*” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 260). At other times the projections directly reinforce a scene to reveal, exemplify and place the audience in an embarrassing situation.

Zoe: I unbutton the front of my dress
Put the hand of the other
On my breast and –

A loud scream

The door flies open to a wedge of light...

Visual Projection:

Silent/secret/sex/scandal/Szymanowski/samczy
(male)/silent/shadows/samica(female)/stories/
sometimes/seen/sklamamac(to lie). (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 266)

The alienation and embarrassment experienced by the audience is not through empathy, pity or identification with Zoe, but through the alienation of the revelation. I will return to audience interaction in chapter three of this thesis.

Australian schools during the assimilationist period always failed to transmit the Polish language as a part of the dominant ideology. The Australian ideology called for monolingualism, which certainly hindered the manifestation of the more marginal languages as it implicitly assumed that English was and should be the only language of instruction to be used at school. From this perspective it is clear that second generation Polish-Australians would struggle to maintain an understanding of their mother tongue despite parental efforts to maintain their language and traditions against assimilationist pressures. Zosia, who attempts to speak to her Mother in Polish only to be misunderstood, exemplifies the dilution of Polish language and tradition in a contemporary Australia.

Zosia: ...I decide to explain to my mother um, *jestem zepsuta-*
#: Brzemienna! (pregnant) Ay-ay-ay!
Zosia: Nie. Zepsuta-the nearest polish word I know-decadent. But my
 mother misunderstands. She thinks I must be pregnant.
#: Oh my God! Our Father- who's the father?
 What will your father say?
 Our Father-Hail Mary Mother-of-God... (Janaczewska, 1997, p.
 265)

Hence, Zosia typifies the situation where social ties among the second generation seem to be very strong however "their knowledge of the Polish language, history and tradition is rather weak" (Pakulski, 1985b, p. 176).

Language as a form of signification inscribed upon the body can be made visible to distinguish social behaviour in relation to class, gender, and history. This is exemplified when Zosia turns on the computer to reveal the word "Krakow" projected over her body, illustrating Zosia's ties to her Polish history. Through adopting the Brechtian device of projection, feminist theatre is able to deconstruct the 'woman' of the theatre. "In the deconstructed space they themselves create, feminist imaginings of

women can then make, in Cixous' evocative phrase, 'the shattering entry into history' " (Kritzer, 1991, p. 11).

While Janaczewska's *Kimch'i Connie* uses wallpaper as a backdrop to the monologue, for *Historia* it is used as a recurring motif with a multiplicity of meanings that both reveal and hide the cracks within Australia's hegemony. Connecting the present with the past can be made by analogy or causality; that is, as Greenblatt (1996) states in 'Resonance and Wonder':

a particular set of historical circumstances could be represented in such a way as to bring out homologies with aspects of the present or, alternatively, those circumstances could be analyzed as the generative forces that led to the modern condition. (p. 274)

The exploration of the ideological and material bases of objects, or what Greenblatt terms 'cultural artefacts' will, within their historical moment, evoke a social and economic transcendence of the present moment. For Greenblatt (1996, p. 276) resonance is "the power of the object displayed to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces." In other words, culture infers a material referent and more particularly, cultural artefacts do not stay still, negotiations and appropriations inescapably bind them from agency. What then is a cultural artefact? For the purpose of this thesis, a cultural artefact may be anything existing within a culture which remains endowed with a history. In this way, even wallpaper can be a cultural artefact and indeed an art form that remains, as Wearing (1996, p. 84) stated previously, as "an organ of public opinion" able to maintain the dominant ideology. Hennessey (1993b, p. 92) posits that the dominant ideology continually works to seal over the cracks in the "social imaginary generated by the contradictions of patriarchal and capitalist social arrangements." Hence, it is continually engaged in what Hennessey terms 'crisis management'. "These

textual crisis-gaps, contradictions, *aporias* – indicate the failure of the hegemonic discourses to successfully seal over or manage the contradictions displaced in the texts of culture” (Hennessey, 1993b, p. 92).

As a cultural artefact that remains one of capitalism's most dominant and particularly accepted art forms the written text inevitably reveals much about society, often in terms of oppression and alienation. For example, Teynac, Nolot and Vivien (1982) see wallpaper as a recurring motif for examination. Taking samples of representation from various texts they see Balzac's wallpaper as “a fashionable decoration, a grotesque and shabby invention” (Teynac et al., 1982, p. 197), and from Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1860), a background for misery. In Emile Zola's *Germinal* (1885) wallpaper hints at social class and in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1876-1877) it symbolises change. And who could forget the famous text of wronged womanhood exemplified in Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), which conveys images of oppression, madness, patriarchy and confinement (Gilman, 1990, p. 56). *Historia* also uses the wallpaper metaphor in the context of woman's repressed position; “the danger that woman can disappear into the wallpaper and can be overwhelmed by family and domestic detail” (Dialogue, 1996, p. 8).

Janaczewska's characters in *Historia* further exemplify the multiple significations of wallpaper. For Zosia, the wallpaper reveals a multiplicity of meanings as it becomes a “mural of family harmony” where “there are no arguments, no sunburn, no secrets” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 260). It also reveals her ethnicity, as her search for The Artist and The Anthropologist's history takes her from “Penrith to Poland; Ambiguity and doubts, Seeded in the wallpaper pomegranates of a Krakow bedroom” (Janaczewska,

1997, p. 266). Further on in the play the wallpaper metaphor seems to suggest the colonised experience, as the white painted wall obscures the wallpaper beneath. It is as if Zosia's history and her search for her own ethnic roots remains largely hidden by the dominant ideology, as her Father "rolled on: Litres of British Paints. Best interior white acrylic." As he covers the cracks in Australian (British) ideologies Zosia begins to "see ... everywhere. Seaming the walls like lightning"... "fine threads of cracks Along the edges of whitewashed walls-" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 275).

The social history of wallpaper usage combines a blend of the social, cultural, technological and economic change within culture. First used in the Middle Ages for religious purposes and to conceal cracks in the walls of lower class dwellings, its true beginnings occurred centuries later, "when the rising middle class began to use decorative paper as an inexpensive imitation of the richly woven tapestries of the aristocracy" (Teynac, Nolot, & Vivien, 1982, i).³ In the 19th and 20th centuries, as the advent of industrialisation increased production levels and machines began to replace manual labour, art objects became available to a wider section of society. Hence, the working class came to afford wallpaper, as for the middle class it had come to represent a "vulgar and imitative form" (Teynac et al., 1982, p. 19). So, similar to its original purpose, wallpaper was again available to create an illusion and to hide the cracks in the walls of poorer dwellings. For Brecht, the theatre provides a means of stripping the 'wallpaper' so to speak, to reveal the cracks within the dominant ideologies of a bourgeois society. This in turn reveals layers of meaning like Umberto Eco's palimpsest *The Name of the Rose*, rather than one homogenised dominant form.

³ William Morris (1834-1896) was the main inspiration of the Arts and Crafts Movement, making over 60 designs for wallpaper between 1862 and 1898 (Osborne, 1985, p. 814).

Brecht's epic theatre emphasises the production of the text. For Wright (1989, p. 31) Brecht sees the text as a site of production, involving author, reader, and an Other, which for Brecht is history. From a socialist-feminist point of view, the Aristotelian ideal can be seen as confirming patriarchal ideology and traditional elites. Brecht strongly opposed Aristotelian dramaturgy by which the plot situates the hero to reveal his or her innermost feelings, placing the audience then as reciprocal subjects reached through emotion, empathy and therefore identification. Linear development is the preferred methodology of Aristotelian dramaturgy, where one scene builds on others rising to the climax. This linearity sees the telling of 'history' as concise and ordered, as opposed to *Historia*, which sees the story as fluid and non-linear. For Janaczewska, her theatrical form lies largely in those narratives:

that cross time and place, narratives that are rarely linear, where the past can be more real than the present and a blending of past and present, memory and reality, of the fantastical and the real." (personal communication, June 13, 1998)

Linearity was seen by Brecht as unable to change society. He saw it as a non-realistic portrayal of life which produced little reflection by the audience on the society in which they lived. Instead, they become passive subjects. Brecht states "the theatre then had to work out an entire new style of art capable of influencing the world and the common people" (Fuegi, 1994, p. 35). He wanted a theatre which mirrors time in a way that provokes the audience to want to change the social reality in which they live, a social reality which goes on producing distorted objects and people.

In *Historia*, neither the sequence nor the unravelling of events is central to the drama since Janaczewska rejects the temptations of narrative and exploits the ability of the live stage to provoke acknowledgment of the vulnerability and plasticity of human lives.

Like Brecht, Janaczewska eschews the Aristotelian evocation of pity and fear in favour of stimulating new understandings of specific social situations through astonishment. This will be examined further in chapter two. Like the anarchic disruptiveness of the Artaudian *avant garde* which initiated the contemporary movement away from traditional narrative structure, Janaczewska abandons linear development in favour of episodic sequences that cross time and space between the two present day women in Sydney, and the Artist and Anthropologist from turn of the century Poland. This time travel literalises how the past never really vanishes, as we are always already marked by our histories.

CHAPTER TWO

TO QUERY THE QUEER: DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES OF SEXUALITY

"I suppose I want to show that sexualities are actually complex, that we are not simply this or that and that they shift and change . . . we also need to look at cultural diversity and the conservative views of the family and sexuality, particularly female sexuality. (Janaczewska, personal communication, June 13, 1998)

This section focuses on the notion of subscribing to the dominant ideology of sexuality that sustains the patriarchal position within capitalism, a subscription that remains largely superficial and illusory. This hegemony relies upon heteronormativity, hence heterosexuality as the dominant discourse. Of all the issues surrounding women's liberation the question of the family is probably one of the most explosive, because it is reinforced through the capitalist discourse and the gendered division of labour. The ideology of gendered subjects is legitimated largely by motherhood and particularly by the 'family' through the process of socialisation. For the ethnic-Australian child, the socialisation period is a merging of cultures, a system of choice that exists across two realities constituted by two hegemonic positions:

Zosia: In the family narratives of the wallpaper beach, there are no arguments, no sunburn, no secrets. And before Wally's well-meaning sales pitch, I start to feel like I'm a prospective buyer, not the occupant of my own life. (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 260)

The concept 'family' became formalised only toward the eighteenth century in Europe, particularly in France and England, and it wasn't until the middle of the nineteenth century that this concept was adopted for the households of the workers and peasants. Prior to this, 'family' had a distinct class connotation because marriage and the family form were possible only among the bourgeoisie, because only classes with property could afford to have a 'family'. However, as Mies (1997, p. 183) states "family in the sense in which we understand it today – that is, as a combination of co-residence and blood relationship based on the patriarchal principle – was not even found among the aristocracy." For the aristocracy, the notion of the 'family' did not imply co-residence of all family members, however, the notion of 'family' for the bourgeois included husband, wife and their offspring - thus "our present concept of family is a bourgeois one" (Mies, 1997, p. 183). It was therefore the bourgeoisie that established the social and sexual division of labour within the nuclear family, thereby providing support to the capitalist hegemony. For Zosia, the notion of the "#: Family - family member - friend-of-the-family - friend-of-a-friend- of -the-family-" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 282) provides a threat to her identity. She usually finds herself trying to "miss these events - go away, or pretend I'm going away and then end up spending all week hiding because I'm too scared to go out in case any family -friend" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 282) were to discover her 'real' identity, which deviates from the dominant ideology reinforced by the position of the family. The reinforcement of dominant Australian ideologies by Zosia's family suggests that Australia promotes or offers a more attractive proposition to the ethnic family.

In the Australian context the family has always been conceptualised politically, economically and socially as the 'nuclear' family. However, after World War II, the

nuclear family became more important for consumerism and the growth of the industry. The nuclear family, which consisted of a heterosexual couple and their offspring with husband as the breadwinner and the wife as housekeeper, was seen to be essential for the functioning of an industrial economy. It was this nuclear family unit that remained the 'norm' and was considered to be the building brick of Australian society and the cornerstone of community stability. Sociological explanations for the norm of the nuclear family with its distinct roles for men and women stem from the ideas of Talcott Parsons, who developed a functionalist model of the family. According to Parsons "the family retains two irreducible functions for present society; the socialisation of children; and the stabilization of adult personality" (Wearing, 1997, p. 119). This stabilization of adult personality relied heavily upon the nuclear family to reinforce dominant ideologies. Hence, the traditional and normative models of masculine and feminine roles see Zoe married to Martin, Zosia pressured to "find a nice man" (after all "A career's all very well, but-") (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 277) and Zosia's Mother persuaded to marry her father "in a hurry. Expecting you and little else. The boat was leaving Golansk. So I joined him and the cargo of table cloths-" all acts consequent to the capitalist imperative (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 263).

In a precapitalist patriarchal society the home and the family were central to the production of goods. However, with the advent of capitalism the socialisation of production was organised with the factory as its centre. Capital established the family as the nuclear family and "those who worked in the new productive centre, the factory, received a wage. Those who were excluded did not" (Costa & James, 1997, p. 41). Thus, with the advent of the capitalist mode of production, women were relegated to a condition of isolation and the domains of private and public spheres were brought into

play, placing “women busy in the kitchen, [and] men busy drinking” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 282). Even Marxist theory saw the role of women as that of subordination. Marginally employed outside the home a woman remains outside of production; she is essentially a supplier of a series of use values in the home. “The housewife is in the classic colonised position – she is denied social, psychological, sexual and economic autonomy. She does not belong to herself” (Allen et. al., cited in Wearing, 1997, p. 125). But to say that the housewife is merely concerned with the production of use-values implies that she is nothing more than a servant to her husband and children. In a capitalist society, which is based on commodity production, the huge quantity of ‘necessary’ household labour produced by women is not considered ‘real work’ since it stands outside the realm of trade. Thus together, capitalism and patriarchy have left ‘woman’ outside of the economic and therefore, the material base.

Patriarchy literally means rule of the father. That is, it is male centred and controlled, and is organised in such a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains, religious, familial, political, economic, social, legal and artistic (Abrams, 1993, p. 234-5). Within the nuclear core of the family with its more limited and more specialised functions, power flowed increasingly to the husband over the wife and to the father over the children. There were a variety of causes for the reinforcement of the authority of the father and husband within the family. Stone (1985) writes of patriarchy in England:

there was the pressure of state propaganda for an authoritarian state and therefore an authoritarian family; Protestant Reformation emphasis on the role of the household rather than the Church as the agency for moral and religious control. (p. 145)

In other words, the church and the state provided despotic authority to the patriarchy: the husband and the father. This is exemplified by Janaczewska (1996) where even her adopted family maintains patriarchal authority. She states:

I go to the bookshop inside an arcade. And from the close-packed shelves, I pull out the pages of my family. Not the family I was born into, but the "family" with whom I've chosen to claim kinship: Kantor, Grotowski, Witkiewicz, Malinowski, Gombrowicz. The drawback is this "adopted" family are predominantly male. I'm disappointed this heritage falters at the boundaries of gender. (p. 99)

Feminist writers often draw on references to the family to make sense of women's oppression. The writing of Marx and Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1942) argues that the nuclear family unit is economically functional for the capitalist system but exploitative of unpaid women workers in the home. Besides keeping women in a totally subordinate position, as people without agency, and without material benefit, the nuclear family remains essential to the capitalist system for numerous reasons. Wearing (1996, p. 125) sees the nuclear family as "the site which aided in using women to service the male labour force, physically, sexually, emotionally and psychologically." The nuclear family acted to contain the militancy of the male labour force by compelling men to support women and children; it provided a reserve of cheap unorganised female labour; it prepared the future labour force; it functioned as the consumption unit which provides capitalism with an inexhaustible market; and finally it was responsible for the transmission of the dominant ideology (Wearing, 1996, p. 125).

Often reduced to a synonym for male dominance; Marx used patriarchy to describe the domestic household system of production. From the Marxist point of view there are two major flaws with patriarchy theory. "It is idealist – there is no conception of ideas being rooted in material reality; and it does not consider the capitalist system as a whole" (German, 1997, p. 148). The basis for the theory of patriarchy is that there are two modes of production, economic and ideological. Marx never separated these as two

separate struggles, but rather they act upon one another. However, Juliet Mitchell proposes two separate struggles she puts it succinctly "we are dealing with two autonomous areas, the economic mode of capitalism and the ideological mode of patriarchy" (German, 1997, p. 149). In terms of ideology patriarchy can only flourish if it remains unquestioned and not challenged; therefore, as long as the patriarchs and their 'subordinates' fully accept the natural justice of the relationship and of the norms within which it is exercised, the legitimacy of the entire capitalist system remains intact. Freud epitomises what patriarchal society said, that from birth every woman suffers from penis envy. However, as Costa and James (1997, p. 51) write "he forgot to add that this feeling of envy begins from the moment she perceives that in some way to have a penis means to have power."

The notion of the family was transformed when production moved from the family to the factory. For Marx, the family becomes "part of the immense superstructure of society which is changed as society itself changes" (German, 1997, p. 151). Thus, the Marxist model exemplifies a dialectic as the family acts upon society, following its changes. However, it is necessary to grasp completely that the family as an institution is a reactionary pillar of class society and the very pillar of the capitalist organisation of work. If we make the mistake of regarding it only as a superstructure;

dependent for change only on the stages of the struggle in the factories, then we will be moving in a limping revolution that will always perpetuate and aggravate a basic contradiction in the class struggle, a contradiction that is functional to capitalist development. (Costa & James, 1997 p. 51)

The 'capitalist' in Marxist feminism sees the model of the family as providing a material base for power by legitimating ideologies.

According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is the production and reproduction of immediate life. This is the commodity women produce, a commodity that remains general to the functioning of all social organisations: the living human being – the future labour. For many feminists the ideology of oppression has often been grounded in biology, “to take procreation and its different consequences for men and women as the root cause” (Barrett, 1997, p. 88). The class nature of the relations of production in advanced industrial societies such as Australia is an important source of women’s oppression and provides a material basis for the generation of ideologies which legitimate women’s responsibility for domestic labour and, in particular, the reproduction of labour power.

Motherhood is thus an integral notion to capitalism. The Church plays a large role in maintaining this ideology and the Heavenly Father ordained women for this role, dictating “physical motherhood for those destined to give natural life; spiritual motherhood for all others” (Wearing, 1984, p. 118). In Australia an ideology of motherhood pervades all levels of the society, claiming the adherence of “all women from all walks of life and socio-economic backgrounds” (Wearing, 1984, p. 85). To be considered a mature, balanced, fulfilled adult, a woman is traditionally relegated to the position of a mother. In the past this point of view was maintained by the expectation that, following marriage, women leave the workforce to bear and rear children, and was reinforced by the state rewarding women with a maternity allowance.⁴ It is through the act of procreation, reproduction and therefore production that the institution of the family reinforces the dominant ideologies of capitalist and patriarchal relations.

⁴ Women are still rewarded a maternity allowance however, women in contemporary Australia are presented with alternatives to the traditional views of leaving the workforce to bear and rear children.

In *The Ideology of Motherhood*, Wearing focuses her research on the Sydney Metropolitan area and states that "suburban mothers were chosen [for the study] as this is the locale where a very high proportion of Australian mothers carry out their mothering"⁵ (Wearing, 1984, p. 12) she writes:

For working class mothers whose previous and present life experiences have been largely tied to the domestic sphere, except for the minimal number of years spent in educational institutions and a few years in a low status, low income job, it could be expected that any sense of self-esteem and satisfaction in life would be associated with the appropriate [sic] sex typed roles of wife and mother. (p. 119)

However, community groups are subjected to demographic change and generations alter, according to dominant ideologies. For example, first generation Australians of immigrant parents may have access to better education and a wider experience of life. This generation gap is illustrated in *Historia* in terms of the Polish community where Zosia's contemporary ethnic family see marriage and motherhood as the traditional women's role within society. Constantly asked whether she has "#: Met anyone special? #: Got a man in your life?" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 282). After all "a nice girl like you - #: Needs a nice Polish boy #: What's the matter with you?" Zosia, of the politically aware generation, curtly replies "If it's breeding you're after, why pick on me, you've got cages full of fucking rabbits!" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 283), thus Zosia uses a biological metaphor.

However, to suggest that biology is the 'essential' cause for women's oppression ignores the power of the ideologies that operate within any given society, ideologies that oppress men and women alike. Ideologies that produce what is allowed to count as reality, such as those of motherhood, women's dependency and the need for male

⁵ Betsy Wearing (1984) has found for her research, a sample group that will support her argument.

protection perpetuate these power relationships. Later feminist writers like Firestone (1970), Mitchell (1971), Eisenstein (1977) and Kuhn (1978) emphasise the fact that all men, not only the capitalists, benefit from the nuclear family situation, and posit gender itself as a material base for the generation of power and ideologies. The work of dominant ideologies is to conceal contradictions in order to maintain the social order. These dominant and therefore 'normative' ideologies begin with the family and reinforce the gender construction of masculine and feminine, particularly throughout the socialisation period of a child's life where the mother or father remains the significant other.

Gender is described by Andersen (cited in Ingraham, 1997, p. 286) as "the socially learned behaviours and expectations that are associated with the two sexes." The extent to which parental behaviour influences gender differences remains contentious, nevertheless, there is evidence that parents do influence gender development. In terms of the family, socialisation is essential to cultural function. Socialisation is the effect of interaction within the family as the internalisation of the culture of the parents. It is through socialisation that children are made members of a particular society by virtue of acquiring the values, beliefs, expectations and accumulated knowledge that constitute its culture. Thus, for a patriarchal and capitalist society reliant upon hierarchical structures of gender, sexuality, class and ethnicity the function of socialisation is vital to the maintenance of the social system. Gender socialisation therefore serves the interests of both capital and men; ideologies such as those which portray the nuclear family as the optimal family and the goodness of motherhood (Wearing, 1984) reinforce the "desirability of gender socialisation and conceal male dominance implicit in such stereotypes" (Wearing, 1996, p. 95).

What must also be considered in terms of socialisation is that many families in contemporary Australia are headed by only one parent and this number has grown rapidly in the last fifteen years.⁶ Wearing writes "the vast majority of sole parents are female and their numbers have grown since 1974 at a faster rate than male sole parent families" (Wearing, 1996, p. 137).⁷ In contemporary society, whether a family is male or female headed, parental roles are more diffuse than in traditional nuclear families (Wearing, 1996, p. 137). Differences in how socialisation is carried out in sole parent families will differ according to the gender of the parent. For example, Wearing (1996, p. 137-8) found that in a study of single fathers "most of the men . . . are still attached to 'patriarchal/detached' modes of parenting as against 'egalitarian/nurturant' models."⁸

In an extract taken from Margaret Waj's paper *First Generation Australian's Discover They Are Poles* (cited in Sussex & Zubrzycki, 1985, p. 5), there is a clear illustration of the historical and ideological factors in the child's environment. It exemplifies the immigrant's socialisation experiences in Australia and is closely aligned to the displaced experiences of the three Polish characters in *Historia*. It uses the metaphor of the home as an island removed from the Australian 'mainland' as the child struggles to develop a self-identity.

I am First Generation Australian who, as I always explained it to my peers 'lived on a Polish Island.' This Polish Island was my home. Inhabited by my family – with regular visits of Polish friends. The food eaten was different from that of the mainland. The language spoken was different and more importantly still the expectations of me and the view of the world there were different. (Sussex & Zubrzycki, 1985, p. 5)

⁶ In July 1980 there were 341 400 sole parent families containing over 550 000 dependent children. This represents 14.5 per cent of all families with dependent children (Wearing, 1996, p. 137).

⁷ So that around 90 per cent of all sole parent families are headed by females (Saunders & Matheson cited in Wearing, 1996, p. 137).

⁸ Men still give priority to their provider role while at least some of the nurturing is done by women either in a paid capacity or as a support for the man on his own. Yet single mothers, gave priority to their nurturing roles and either worked part-time or depended on meagre welfare benefits. This poverty trap faced by single mothers has been well-documented (Wearing, 1996, p. 138).

These images of island and mainland represent the policy of the late 1960s in Australia, which prescribed assimilation or integration. Living in an environment filled with awkward feelings of displacement, the child of the immigrant was left with the ambiguity of self-identification. Sussex and Zubrzycki (1985) state:

The migrant parent himself [sic] is re-identifying himself but the child's problem is magnified because in the period where self-identification is crucial and should be a natural slotting into society and establishing a sense of belonging becomes a situation of choice. (p. 6)

But more than this, the socialisation period of an immigrant child is confused by two dominant ideologies existing across cultures – that of the new country and their 'homeland'. Both parent and child are establishing their identity, but starting at markedly different positions.

Clearly, gender plays a major role in the socialisation process of the young into 'proper' male and female identities, attitudes and behaviours. Nevertheless, the term 'socialisation' for many, including Wearing (1996):

Is based on the assumption of fixed and complementary roles for adult males and females. Adults who do not fit such roles, such as single women and the homosexual, are perceived as deviant and improperly socialised. (p. 113)

Scholars have long debated the origins of gender differences. For Bailey and Pillard (cited in Walsh, 1997, p. 184) "the most consistent evidence for the innateness of sexual orientation comes from genetic studies." They go on to say "today sex differences in behaviour are more often thought to be the result of socialization by parents, peers, and the culture as a whole. But such processes cannot readily explain why a minority develops homosexuality" (Walsh, 1997, p. 186).

Homosexuality is generally understood to describe sexual attraction to one's own sex. To a certain extent, debates about what constitutes homosexuality can be understood in terms of the essentialist and the constructionist positions (Jagose, 1997, p. 8). Essentialists tend to regard identity as natural, fixed and innate while constructionists "assume identity is fluid, the effect of social conditioning and available cultural models for understanding oneself" (Jagose, 1997, p. 8). The problems that emerge from these two positions are complex, because the essentialist claim that some people are born homosexual has been used in:

anti-homophobic attempts to secure civil rights-based recognition for homosexuals and on the other hand, the constructionist view that homosexuality is somehow or other acquired has been aligned with homophobic attempts to suggest that homosexual orientations can and should be corrected. (Jagose, 1997, p. 9)

Historia explores the essentialist and constructionist positions through the doubling of characters. "Essentialists assume that homosexuality exists across time as a universal phenomenon which has a marginalised but continuous and coherent history of its own" (Jagose, 1997, p. 9). This implies that the nature of homosexuality remains cyclical and that it is always constituted through the same actions and behaviour in varying time frames and across alternative spaces. Given this perspective *The Artist* and *The Anthropologist* in turn of the century Poland act as 'doubles' to Zosia and Zoe, the two contemporary Sydney women. It implies that the experiences of the gay men are an exact replica of the lesbian couple and that same-sex love, whether it is two males or two females, is a universal experience. This view is accompanied and often fuelled by speculation. To take a historical character and apply it to the dominant ideologies of contemporary society is not only to take it out of context but also, to assume its meaning remains the same throughout history.

Historia remains pre-occupied with these questions of dominant ideologies and the illusions created by them. For Zosia, her speculation over *The Artist and The Anthropologist* take her from Penrith to Poland; "Ambiguity and doubts. Seeded in the wallpaper pomegranates of a Krakow bedroom. A version of events hinted at in letters. In library archives in the dark-" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 265-66). Zoe asks "...why do these men interest you so much?" For Zosia "someone has to know more than they're telling" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 274).

Zosia: He thinks about marrying a girl from Melbourne.
But he calls his fiancée E-R-M. Erm. Like he can't
quite remember who she is.
Zoe: He must have loved her
Zosia: Why?
Zoe: Why else would he want to marry her!
Zosia: I don't know, Zoe. Why do gay men marry?
PAUSE.
Why did you marry Martin?
(Janaczewska, 1997, p. 264)

For Zoe who has subscribed to the dominant ideology of marriage expected of her, she assumes that love is the only reason for marriage. Thus, she has tried to superimpose her life – her dominant ideology – over these two historical figures.

Constructionists, by contrast, "assume that because same-sex sex acts have different cultural meanings in different historical contexts, they are not identical across time and space" (Jagose, 1997, p. 9). This notion is explored by Benterrak, Muecke, and Roe, (1984, p. 125) who see the misfortune of history as "the responsibility it is forced to bear, the responsibility of telling us what happened in the past so that our present and future actions will be guided with this knowledge." Thus it has largely been the Left:

which has asked so much of history, insisting that it go beyond the orthodox demand for a history which maintains a continuity with the values of the present, a history which would never contradict current conceptions of "common sense". (Benterrak, et al., 1984, p. 125)

Thus, the constructionist view does go beyond a cyclical history. This view would see the four characters as interestingly comparative with the meanings of behaviour and body language varying according to time frame. Faderman has contributed to the history of sexuality in her text *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers* (1992), where she develops the nature of lesbian life in twentieth century America. She explores the notion that in centuries outside our own, romantic friendships between women were socially sanctioned. Although there were limitations placed upon these relationships as far as society was concerned, "there was no such thing as a "lesbian" as the twentieth century recognizes the term" (Faderman, 1992, p. 2). Even within the same historical moment the notion of hetero/homo love has a tenuous existence. The Artist states "In Krakow you loved me. In another language-" the Anthropologist replies "It was different in Krakow" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 261-2). The Anthropologist has assimilated to fit the dominant culture, which often feels like another period in time and here he subscribes and almost conforms to the institution of marriage, the institutionalised norm that as we have seen, confuses Zosia. The constructionist view is often sourced to the work of Foucault, who argues in *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* that "homosexuality is necessarily a modern formation because, while there were previously same-sex acts, there was no corresponding category of identification" (Jagose, 1997, p. 10).

Theorists argue that recent definitions of homosexuality and accounts of its historic development have important implications for naturalised or common sense understandings of heterosexuality. For example, many theorists argue that "since the term 'heterosexuality' is a back formation of 'homosexuality' -- the former circulating only after the latter -- heterosexuality is derivative of homosexuality" (Katz cited in Jagose, 1997, p. 16) and that such a genealogy has important ideological consequences.

So, although theories concerning the formation of modern homosexuality differ, there is significant agreement that "homosexuality, as it is understood today, is not a transhistorical phenomenon" (Jagose, 1997, p. 15). Some critics amalgamate psychoanalytic and socialisation theories to suggest that a boy or girl with certain genetically influenced personality traits, raised in a certain kind of family, has unusual childhood experiences that contribute to adult homosexual orientation. However, Bailey and Pillard (cited in Walsh, 1997, p. 186) see this theory as "vague and implausible."

For a materialist discourse, gender is not innate. Rather, it is formed through enculturation; hence, socialisation, as gender divisions are placed at the service of the dominant culture's ideology. Materialist feminism focuses on "the construction of ideology in social formations influenced by gender, race, class, and categories of sexual preference" (Doian, 1988, p. 16). However, what many analyses of gender (like the biological and socialisation model) fail to recognise is that the category 'homosexual' can only exist in relation to the category 'heterosexual'. Janaczewska's *Historia* makes this awareness profound in the first scene, which plays with traditional notions of gender juxtaposed with the 'other' more 'deviant' opposition. "*A woman and man kiss. Their action is caught in the passing glow of a train. Darkness. Silence*" and later "*Two women kiss. Lit up by the moving lights of a passing train. Darkness*" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 259). Similarly, towards the end of the play Zosia metaphorically defies the traditional heterosexual role expected of her when she says "by the age of fourteen I started sleeping with Lazy-Daisy and Sadie-Rose. Trailing blossoms and wallpaper girlfriends I picked and my father and Wujku Jerzy pasted onto my bedroom walls" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 276). What is constituted as normal can

only be defined by its deviant predecessor hence, we recognise the hetero-kiss as the 'norm', and the fact that Zosia isn't transplanting male idols onto her walls, as lesbian, 'Other', deviant and homosexual.

Adrienne Rich's (1980) article *On Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* and Monique Wittig's (1992) *The Straight Mind* confront this institution of heterosexuality, asserting that it is "neither natural nor inevitable but instead is a contrived, constructed, and taken-for-granted institution or, as Wittig argues, a political regime" (Ingraham, 1997, p. 289). Ingraham (1997) writes:

Early second-wave feminism such as the Furies Collective, Purple September Staff, Redstockings (1975), Rita Mae Brown (1976) and Charlotte Bunch (1976) challenged dominant notions of heterosexuality as naturally occurring and argued that instead it is a highly organized social institution rife with multiple forms of domination and ideological control. (p. 289)

Positing a varied view on the nature of the dominant ideology as maintaining a 'heterosexual' hence, 'normal,' sexual nature is Ingraham who sees feminist sociological understandings of gender often participating in the reproduction of what Ingraham (1997, p. 275) calls "the heterosexual imaginary."

The 'imaginary' is a Lacanian term borrowed from Althusser for the theory of ideology which Althusser sees as "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Ingraham, 1997, p. 275). Althusser argues the imaginary to be an image or representation of reality, which masks the historical and material conditions of life. The heterosexual imaginary, then, is for Ingraham (1997, p. 275) "that way of thinking which conceals the operation of heterosexuality in structuring gender and closes off any critical analysis of heterosexuality as an organizing institution." In other words the effect of this depiction of a reality is that heterosexuality is inherently innate,

naturally' occurring and therefore unquestioned; hence, gender remains understood as socially constructed and central to the organisation of a hegemonic society.

Heteronormative assumptions, heteronormativity being – “the view that institutionalized heterosexuality constitutes the standard for legitimate and prescriptive sociosexual arrangements” – represent one of the main premises of any variation on feminist thought (Ingraham, 1997, p. 275-6). For many though, the exploration of one's sexuality under the institution of heterosexuality as the dominant ideology which has been romanticised, remains uncomfortable and unexpected. Janaczewska (1997-1998) asks:

have we at some level confused capital – R Romanticism, a potent and complex currency in the Eastern European cultural economy, with the lower-case – r romanticism of Mills and Boon plots, candle-lit dinners and happy – ever – after endings?” (p. 10)

The Mills and Boon lower-case ‘r’ romanticism would seem the case in *Historia* when Zoe experiences her first sexual encounter, which remains shrouded in the ‘romanticised’ dominant ideology. She calls Eugene, a male and the heteronormative choice, because she really “wants to do it” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 278).

Because everyone says he's experienced. And anyway, I've got the whole thing planned. He'll come over with flowers – orchids, a big bunch. He'll start to undress me as we head for my room where I've lit candles and scattered petals – and all the time Eugene will be kissing me – caressing me – whispering in my ear how much he loves me – and I'm in this frenzy of excitement and anticipation – but-. (p. 278)

But, what occurs is a complete demystification of this romanticised image as he “says he'd prefer to go into the shed or garage – so we end up in the laundry” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 278). Zoe ends up with a cut on her shoulder “where he pressed me into a clothes peg, a lino burn on my back, I've bruised my hand, my thighs are sticky and my

knickers are on back to front, and then the washing machine starts to flood” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 278).⁹

Ingraham’s (1997) main argument in terms of a feminist sociology is that:

the material conditions of capitalist patriarchal societies are more centrally linked to institutionalized heterosexuality than to gender and, moreover, that gender (under the patriarchal arrangements prevailing now) is inextricably bound up with heterosexuality. (p. 276)

If we shift the focus from gender to heterogender as the unit of analysis, institutionalised heterosexuality becomes visible as central to the constructed ‘masculine, ‘feminine’ roles, and hence, the division of labour. The gendered heterosexual/homosexual binary is central to maintaining a homogenous sexuality in the West, dividing these groups into a majority and a minority, a good and an inherently evil act described by The Anthropologist [*as if writing*] as:

the savage part of human sexuality,
the terror and mystery that rises from the deep,
that returns monstrous,
in inhuman guises whenever reason slumbers...
[*Stops writing and looks at The Artist*].
Is this what we call the unconscious?

The Artist replies “That’s what I call love” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 261). Love is an unquestionable assumption in most heterosexual intimate relationships which fit the dominant ideology’s expectation. Janaczewska (personal communication, June 13, 1998) writes “there is . . . this same assumption that everybody is tied to some happy jolly, extended heterosexual family until someone said well look there are happy gay and bisexual people in those communities too.” However, for many homosexual relationships, even in contemporary Australia, it is assumed by the dominant ideology that the union is merely as superficial as sex or as crude as Zosia’s childhood memories

⁹ There is a similar scene in the new Australian film called *The Boys* which is also set in the suburbs of Western Sydney, directed by Rowan Woods.

which are all she can think about at the time of "Debbie-Ann's fingers inside my cunt" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 262).¹⁰ Because the status of homosexual acts in the past have been considered criminal, the 'deviant' association by the dominant ideology remains intact.¹¹

For the homosexual this view is quite often reversed and they felt disgust towards the heterosexual vulgarity condoned by the dominant ideology. Zoe states "Here comes the belly dancer – sh – sh - shimmying in – straight to Peter – tits in his face – he loves it – rattling the coins on her tits and cunt – up front – eat me – feed me – fuck me-" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 270). Zosia similarly finds the 'heteronormative' behaviour disgusting. "I wonder what Jan sees in Phil? Oh ugh! She's finishing up the scraps he's left on his plate. I will never, ever, eat my lover's left-overs" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 270). These examples of superficial heterosexuality may be compared with the poetic depth Janaczewska provides the two gay characters, exemplified in the following two separate dialogues:

The Anthropologist: This morning I watched you wake up;
The rise and descent of your breath.
The amethyst capillaries that criss-crossed
The tissue of your eyelids,
And the tiny brown planets of your pupils
Drinking in light dissipated by the stars –
(Janaczewska, 1997, p. 261)

The Artist: Candle-light on your back –
The touch of your body –
Brushed over by brown moths;
The light from the fire
Spills off my neck

¹⁰ The superficiality associated with homosexual relationships is maintained by the lack of Partnership recognition laws. Because the homosexual relationship is not recognised as de-facto or other, rights associated with property settlements, title transfers, social security and taxation are problematic. For example, in terms of taxation this non-recognition sees homosexuals as single and are therefore placed in a much higher tax bracket (Gay & Lesbian Equality, personal communication, Nov 4, 1998).

¹¹ The decriminalisation of homosexuality occurred in Western Australia in 1989 through an act entitled *Decriminalisation of Sodomy (Law Reform)*. The final state to decriminalise homosexuality was Tasmania in May 1997 (Gay & Lesbian Equality, personal communication, Nov 4, 1998).

Slides onto your face
 It's all possible
 Encircled by you;
 In a room
 Thick with crimson pomegranates.
 (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 259)

Janaczewska illustrates the 'Other' perspective as a heightened experience. The reference to moths, although closely related to the traditionally more lovely butterfly species, represents the sub-culture of a 'hegemonic' society. Unlike the dominant or accepted species of aesthetic beauty, which flies by day, the moth is most active at night. It can only carry out its acts in a hidden and covert way by darkness, so by day the dominant ideologies remain intact, unified, unquestioned and largely illusory. This reference to 'moths' may also refer to the chrysalis cocoon of the moth as it 'comes out' of 'closet doors' so to speak, signifying change. Sedgwick (1991, p. 3) writes "'Closetedness' itself is a performance initiated as such by the speech act of a silence." Homosexuals occupying the space of silence therefore perpetuate their position as 'deviant'.

Being "brushed over by brown moths" also pertains to the image of Kaposi's Sarcoma, which is normally a rare form of skin cancer but much less rare in advanced AIDS patients. The cancer causes purple or brown lesions on the skin which resemble bruises but are painless. AIDS is one of the most controversial subjects to do with sexuality as it is considered a gay disease. This HIV/AIDS theme is central to Janaczewska's *Blood Orange* (1993), which alienates the audience due to its controversial and contemporary nature. AIDS, being almost exclusively associated with gay men in Australia infers a bias from within the dominant ideology of contemporary culture.¹² As such homosexual

¹² Generally the only other association made with AIDS in contemporary Australia is that of the 'deviant' drug user.

identities related to men have had more exposure than lesbian women.¹³ Thus, "some lesbian artists choose to ignore their lesbianism and compete in a male dominated art world" while others "identify as feminist and contextualise their art within the Women's Movement . . ." (Curtin University of Technology, 1994, p. 10:10).

As the gay and women's movements developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s many lesbians felt there was no longer a space for them and began to challenge institutionalised homophobia and sexism in both movements. Both the gay and lesbian feminist models of liberation took the constructionist understanding of sexuality, positing and emphasising the malleability of gender and sexuality. This endeavour has become the regime of the new 'queer theory,' as it is now called, that has emerged as one of the prominent new areas of academic scholarship.

Once the term 'queer' was, at best, slang for homosexual, at worst, a term of homophobic abuse. However, in recent years 'queer' has come to be used differently, sometimes as an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginal sexual self identifications and at other times to describe a theoretical model which has developed out of more traditional lesbian and gay studies. MacNeill (cited in Berry & Jagose, 1996, p. 8) makes *Some Notes Toward a Self Definition of Queer*, writing "Queer embraces all but straight. And gay. It attempts to speak for a whole range of behaviours that do not embrace straight or gay. It refutes identification." Thus, 'Queer' theory, whose ideas are not new, resists the model of stability previously explored through dominant ideologies and socialisation that claim heterosexuality as its origin and instead focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire. Demonstrating the

¹³ This is exemplified by the legislation for the age of consent laws. Because 'homosexual' sex is defined by law as male/male sex, the consent does not specify lesbians who therefore remain within the heterosexual age of consent laws (Age of consent, 1997).

impossibility of any 'natural' sexuality, it calls into question even such apparently unproblematic and 'universalised' terms as 'man' and 'woman'.

Mapping identity requires interrogating the hegemonic circuit that circulates 'natural' subject positions. An emerging immigrant queer identity can be mapped through a "projection of sexual mimicry decentered as cultural mimicry" (Yue, 1996, p. 92). Yue posits this decentering through the discursive splitting of dichotomies between straight/queer, hetero/homo, foreigner/native, reel/real, fictional/factual, totality/partiality, original/copy, and object/subject. For a migrant of Non-English-Speaking-Background (NESB) who is also lesbian or queer, crossing the border of dominant ideology is a continual negotiation of the different times of cultures, society's and languages. For Yue, post-colonial experiences continually divide, contradict and complement the immigrant-NESB lesbian (Yue, 1996, p. 93). Yue (1996, p. 93) states "operating along the same paradigm as the construction of gender and nation the construction of a NESBian presupposes necessary exclusion and occlusion." Yue (1996, p. 93) sees this NESBian identity as being tied to a politics of difference.

Like many discourses NESBian exists via Otherness constituted through the margins of inside and outside, belonging and not belonging, though I often feel that to essentialise these polar oppositions is to sustain that position of Otherness. Like 'queer theory', NESBian is an umbrella and collective identity for lesbians from minority ethnic non-English speaking backgrounds. That notwithstanding, Yue's NESBian proposition is useful because it accepts the diversity of moments in history, a diversity that cuts across different generations. For example, second-generation Australian born women from

Italian, Greek or Polish backgrounds do not share the same geopolitical and temporal paradox as others.

Lesbians are materially oppressed by heterosexuality and in terms of a materialist feminism NESBian offers a:

temporary moment which problematizes the institutional terrain of its epistemology, calling into question the simultaneous materiality of the signifieds 'lesbian' and 'NESB' as contingent to the discourses and politics of queer in Australia. (Yue, 1996, p. 95)

The NESBian can be seen as the liminal site, the in betweenness of boundaries, cultures and systems of economy. For Mattison (cited in Yue, p. 96) the question: where is the NESBian? is ambiguous and posits the subject outside a reality, outside ideologies and outside oppositional dichotomies:

I am the impossible and the possible, the continual doing and undoing of self. I am an experience . . . that continues to explode the very categories of race, class, gender and sexuality, an experience that offers the potential to rewrite the determinations of that constellation of identities and to expand their connections. I am a story . . . somewhere in the lonely recesses of your experiences, at the most dangerous edges of your imagination. Where shadow meets light, where thought meets language, where silence beats against the sound barrier. (1996, p. 96)

This is quite possibly the place that Zosia searches for "...looking for a way to be Polish-Australian that doesn't gloss over, or make invisible, my sexuality-" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 283).

CHAPTER THREE

CORPOREAL BODIES IN THE THEATRE:

WOMEN MAKING A SPECTACLE

There's something about the power of live action on stage and the audience. It is one of our most enduring community moments, where people come together to share an experience. I like its spatial and visual factor . . . (Janaczewska, personal communication, June 13, 1998)

Through representation theatre is ideological and inherently political. The meaning-making process of reading signs of classification and signification through its reception, is not only understood but is informed by the dominant ideologies of the all-knowing male voyeuristic gaze. The representation of minority 'peoples' positioned through the physical body and the representation of experience within the 'space' of the theatre can deconstruct mythologies connected with 'feminine' and 'masculine' bodies. This deconstruction occurs through deviation from dominant and exnominated markers associated with gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class, to instead exploit these 'natural' classifications of meaning-making as constructs by and for the capitalist and patriarchal hegemonies.

The use of theatrical form is implicitly political, either reinforcing the accepted status quo or challenging it through representation. "The idea that literary texts 'represent' something – the physical, spiritual, mental, or social worlds – seems self-evident" (Selden, 1988, p. 7). In this way 'represent' could mean "to give a pictorial rendering or symbolization of external objects, or to reveal the general and universal feature of

human nature" (Selden, 1988, p. 7). However, the arguments of Derrida and his followers develop a strong anti-representational case. Similarly, Plato's *Republic* regards the artist as an imitator of imitations. Plato writes "the painter's work is three times removed from 'the essential nature' of a thing: the artist imitates the physical object which is in turn a faint 'copy' of the Idea (or Form) of the thing" (Selden, 1988, p. 7). In other words, Plato's 'imitation' or mimesis, is always carried by negative connotation, where imitation can only produce a mere copy of something which is less pure than the original (Selden, 1988, p. 40). In contrast, Aristotle treats imitation as "a basic human faculty which expresses itself in a wide range of arts To imitate is not to produce a copy or mirror reflection of something, but involves a complex mediation of reality" (Selden, 1988, p. 40). Thus, the view that representation is realistic and can be a 'real' imitation of life is only feasible in that the materiality and ideologies of social life, are mediated within that representation.

To accept the dominant ideologies of society is to present an all-pervasive 'mediated' reality in the space of the stage. Tait (1994, p. 28) writes "since realism is supposedly mimetic to social reality, it complicitly upholds belief in the dominance of a monolithic reality." Brecht firmly rejects Aristotle's view that "art must correspond to life *and* achieve a certain structural order" (Selden, 1988, p. 40) and instead his theory of *a priori* assumption explores the notion that to create a new political order requires the overthrow of the existing system and is thus "an assumption premised on one extant reality" (Tait, 1994, p. 30). Brecht, disagrees with Lukàcs statement that "art is a special way of reflecting reality" (Selden, 1988, p. 42). Instead, he proposes that this 'one extant reality' produces problems because "throughout history 'new problems' come up and demand new techniques. Reality alters; to represent it the means of

representation must alter too" (Selden, 1988, p. 42-3). For Janaczewska (personal communication, June 13, 1998), the attraction of theatre as a system of representation is largely about offering something that mainstream media can't. She states:

I don't believe that theatre can change the world, but theatre can put forward different points of view or the complexities of things in a way that television rarely can. Theatre can explore contradiction, depth and complexities.

Ideology is related to social structures not as a simple mimetic reflection, but as a force that participates in creating and maintaining those dominant social arrangements of class, sexuality, gender and ethnicity. Barrett insists that representation is not simply a mimetic space, but one within which ideology is bounded as meaning. Rather than accepting texts and other cultural products as necessary representations of the social reality of any particular period Barrett proposes that they are more accurately "an indication of the bounds within which particular meanings are constructed and negotiated in a given social formation" (cited in Dolan, 1988, p. 16). Thus Janaczewska's *Historia* goes 'beyond' the representation of accepted dominant ideologies within the social formation of contemporary Australian life as it penetrates these discourses and deconstructs meanings through deviation from the norm. It is here that theatre becomes political.

The power of alternative theatre is located in its ability to challenge these social arrangements. Theatre acts in a subversive way to illustrate that it is not a mirror of reality but is instead a more active ideological force. Theatre practitioners can affect social reality by condensing and restaging "ideas about the impact of social and political forces on individual lives in ways which educate an audience to think and act differently" (Tait, 1994, p. 29). The restaging of theatre through the Brechtian

technique is just one example of the theatre's ability to alter the representation of ideologies associated with the materiality of gender, ethnicity, class and sexuality. For Tait (1994, p. 65) a materialist feminist approach to theatre "recognises that theatrical innovation frames experiences of cultural diversity, class and sexual preference in defining the position of a female subject." Since dominant cultural meanings both constitute and are reconstituted by representation, deconstructing performance from a feminist perspective entails the uncovering of ideological determinants, particularly those associated with the oppression of gender and sexuality. Hence, for critics questioning the positioning of an ethnic person or 'body' within those networks of discourses and material practices that make up contemporary social life, it is the representation of 'woman' that must be revised and critiqued. Tait (1994, p. 27) refers to this feminist interrogation of theatrical form as "a 'double-entry' challenging the structure of gendered experience both within theatre and social reality." The representation of experience is thus informed by categories associated with the dominant ideologies encountered in the 'social reality' of 'woman'. This 'woman's' experience must not be seen as the representation of a monolithic reality which equates all women with a shared experience.

Scott (1992, p. 27) views experience as "at once always already an interpretation *and* . . . in need of interpretation. What counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straight forward; it is always contested, always therefore political." The notion of experience and the story telling of experiences by minority groups is crucial to the importance of discourse and political practice within the theatre. The telling of experience within the social space of the theatre allows for an acceptance of ideologies where this experience becomes metonymical to the experience of social reality or a challenging of it, whereby

dominant ideologies are exemplified as constructs and are inadvertently subverted. Scott (1992, p. 25) states that "making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms." For DeLauretis (1994, p. 159) experience in the general sense is "a *process* by which, for all social beings, subjectivity is constructed. Through that process one places oneself or is placed in social reality." This process of subjectivity is continuous, its achievement unending and for each person "subjectivity is an ongoing construction, not a fixed point of departure or arrival from which one then interacts with the world" (DeLauretis, 1984, p. 159).

Many contemporary playwrights, including Janaczewska, subvert the notion that women, particularly ethnic women, are invisible within the dominant narratives of history, within the superstructure of society or traditionally on the stage. By placing the two women of *Historia* in the space of the theatre Janaczewska re-writes a history dominated by males. The place of women's experience onstage has increased in the number of productions by women, and is in part the result of pressure from the women's theatre movement and organisations such as Playworks, which was established in 1984 to provide support for the development of plays by women. Despite this, women playwrights are still marginalised. Janaczewska (personal communication, June 13, 1998) states "I think there are some fantastic women writers, but for most theatre companies the artistic directors are men who commission men to write about being men, - that is the sad fact of it." Similarly, when women write about their experiences of being a woman it becomes "that classic thing where if a man writes a play about a Father and son, the theme would seem universal, but if a woman writes it, it becomes a domestic" (Janaczewska, personal communication, June 13, 1998). Thus, though women have traditionally been endowed with different subject matter through

'real' life experience, companies like Playworks encourage women writers to write their own stories and are therefore breaking new ground with content, leaving women free to experiment with and reshape reality with innovative forms.

Bodies are fictionalized, hence positioned by cultural narratives and discourses, which are embodiments of culturally established canons, norms and representational forms. The body becomes theatre(s) of social laws and rights which inform and render corporeal flesh into "determinate bodies, producing the flesh as a point of departure and a locus of incision, a point of "reality" or "nature" understood (fictionally) as prior to, and as the raw material of social practices" (Grosz, 1994, p. 118). The female body in particular, becomes transcribed and marked by the culture that produced the psychological making of the corporeal body. This body is "positioned within myths and belief systems that form a culture's social narratives and self-representations" (Grosz, 1994, p. 119). Since the female body has been so often proclaimed as 'invisible' to the dominant hierarchy of 'being' within society and within representations of society it cannot be 'seen'. Therefore theatrical representation of the corporeal 'woman' challenges the hegemony of male desire.

Woman exists as a representation of her own marginality from dominant discourses.

For Kristeva, (cited in Dolan, 1988) in an often-cited argument:

A woman cannot "be"; it is something, which does not even belong in the order of *being*. It follows that a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists In "woman" I see something that cannot be represented, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies . . . (p. 99)

Janaczewska's postmodern use of the performer who "negates the existence of an intrinsic knowable self" (Tait, 1994, p. 32) through fragmentation of memory and

recollection, creates a transient self “made up of visual images and psychic fragments, interspersing recognisable features against unexpected cultural references to suggest how identity is constantly being reshaped” (Tait, 1994, p. 32). The identity, which can never be fixed, is a point of departure for Janaczewska (personal communication, June 13, 1998), and she states “I suppose I want to show that sexualities are actually complex, that we are not simply this or that and that they shift and change [pause]. It also addresses multiculturalism.” Janaczewska’s script manifests a site of psychic repression which “throws back random fragments or pieces without presenting an intact or complete description” (Tait, 1994, p. 33). Thus, the questioning of a modernist epistemology based on a clear distinction between subject and object becomes confused through the postmodernist discourse of performance, which institutes a partial critique of subjectivity. This portrays identity as unstable and refracted; the psyche is not necessarily the unified site that modernism once claimed.

When a body is displayed in representation which belongs to the female gender class because of ex-nomination, it is assumed to be heterosexual and furthermore, in Western culture ‘white,’ since male colonisers and male desire organise the representational system. The representation of sexuality in Janaczewska’s *Historia* disrupts the assumption “of heterosexuality, and replac[es] male desire with lesbian desire, . . . [and] offers radical new readings of the meanings produced by representation” (Dolan, 1988, p. 63). The body interrogates these naturalised and ex-nominated assumptions through its physical exposure of marginalised and invisible ‘groups’. Case (1990, p. 41) understands that as lesbian work is brought out of its marginalised context and traded as critical currency within the realm of heterosexual theatre venues, the question of the performance’s ‘readability’ becomes complex. The readability of performance becomes

significantly more intricate when the geography of production is taken into account. *Historia* was first performed by Sydney Theatre Company's Australian People's Theatre at Wharf 2 in February of 1996. While one cannot assume the composition of this audience as cultural studies posits 'audience' as "always already acknowledged to be fragmented" (Doty, 1993, p. 1), given that Sydney is host city to the world's largest gay and lesbian Mardi Gras the audience would be well exposed to 'alternative' sexuality. As such, it hardly needs artistic-erotic embellishment to serve as a set for live homosexual sex theatre. Indeed Janaczewska (personal communication, June 13, 1998) writes "on the whole I think particularly in Sydney, people are quite used to this [sexuality], I mean this is the home of the Mardi Gras. They are fairly comfortable with sexuality." However what cannot be dismissed is the fact that Zoe's experience of normative sexuality perhaps undercuts this reception as a Western suburbs audience may not be used to this style of performance.

Historia's crucial investment as a text that challenges the status quo is that it constructs a narrative that connects an audience's pleasure to the activities and relationships of women with women and men with men. It is this kind of narrative construction that Doty (1993, p. 41) calls 'lesbian' or 'queer'. She uses 'queer' as a way of describing a cultural common ground between lesbians and gays as well as other non-straight – "a term representing unity as well as suggesting diversity" (Doty, 1993, p. 2). Doty writes "I am using the term "queer" to mark a flexible *space* for the expression of all aspects of non-straight cultural production and reception" [*italics added*] (1993, p. 3). As such 'queer' theatre provides a space for the expression of the materiality of non-straight or alternative sexuality. Doty (1993, p. 3) sees narratives that depict women forming emotional, intellectual, and erotic relationships with each other out of choice rather than

from necessity as a threatening representation to the hegemony of society. "What is threatening about these women-centered programs would be in danger of overwhelming the queer pleasures many audiences unwittingly experience as they watch women characters together" (Doty, 1993, p. 3). As such, the position of the ideal spectator as a representative of the dominant culture is denaturalised. Thus, in lesbian performance the representation of desire is often confronting because "lesbian sexuality is given voice and imaged in theatre, where heterosexual male desire has historically reigned in the form of the male gaze" (Dolan, 1988, p. 67-8).

The theatre constructs a space for both the performer and the audience. A normally blacked out auditorium that adopts the fictitious fourth wall tends to unify the group through commonality and sets the actors apart from the audience, placing them in an observable position. Where the female body is present on stage the composition of a male audience, members 'gaze' their fantasies onto the objectified woman. Given this regime the men within the audience are constituted as 'gazers' and women as the 'gazed upon,' hence, "men as voyeurs and women as exhibitionists" (Case, 1996, p. 68). The representation of woman as image is so pervasive in Western culture that 'Woman' has been frequently constituted as the ground of representation. 'Woman' has become what Woolf calls 'the looking glass', held up to man that reflects him at twice his natural size and prefigures him as an all-knowing figure.¹⁴

This model can be explored through Foucault's panopticon mechanism, which arranges "spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately" (Foucault, 1992, p. 85). As the woman is seen, but does not have the agency herself to

¹⁴ Taken from Virginia Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own*, published in 1929.

gaze, she is the object of information within the space but rarely a subject in communication (Foucault, 1992, p. 85). As such, the gazed-upon is forever under surveillance, ensuring the functional power is handed to the male gazer. Foucault (1992, p. 85) writes that the panopticon model acts like "so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible." When the representation of the gazed-upon woman is displaced or deconstructed against the gender normality, re-figuring and re-coding male desire becomes an act of subversion generated within the space of the theatre.

So again, the 'experience' of same-sex partners within the space of the theatrical realm constructs a different relationship between performers and spectators on the basis of gender roles. Case (1990) writes:

the postmodernist, camp, collectivist performances of Split Britches and the WOW Café became the space of debate on the radical implications of lesbian desire's disruption of conventional paradigms of spectatorship. (p. 40)

This debate does not seem surprising considering the interests of patriarchal heterosexual culture whose aim would be to devalue any potential site of deviation from the maintained hegemony, particularly woman-centred pleasures which rely on the audience assuming 'queer' positions. Thus, the representation of lesbian desire allows for a rearticulation of gender and sexuality in the exchange between spectator and performer.

Janaczewska's *Historia* combines the fictional past with the dramatic present in the space of the theatre. It is within this 'space' that the text and audience meet, a space which for women has been hard-won and daily threatened, a place of reaffirmation and renegotiation that explores sexual difference. Tait (1994, p. 131) sees feminist theatre

as a discourse of space "to expose the gendered separations in female experience of spatiality and locate artistic spaces within feminisms." In opposition to Aristotle, Plato describes a space "which is eternal and indestructible, which provides a position for everything that comes to be, and which is apprehended without the senses by a sort of spiritual reasoning and so is hard to believe in . . ." (Grosz, 1995, p. 116). In other words, space for Plato is an entity that is neither apprehended by the senses nor by reason alone. In theatre, physical and temporal spaces create their own geographies while simultaneously creating psychological spaces that can intersect with social spaces. Tait (1994) explains:

it is the presence of the physical body within the complex intersection of these conceptual geographies in theatre, which offers the possibility of redefining the individual's relation to the social order in feminist performance. (p. 131)

Spatial location within the theatre is essential to the formulation of a performative identity. Tait adopts a Foucauldian examination of systems of power and knowledge within the partitioning of the social space of the theatre to reveal that "society orchestrates and structures space to control, contain, exclude and imprison" (Tait, 1994, p. 132). Thus, space within the theatre is also a contested environment of signification, particularly in relation to categories of gender, class and race.

The space of the theatre has the ability to explore the process of self-identity, a leap into narrative that employs seeing as a way of knowing. For Phelan (1993, p. 5) "mimetic correspondence has a psychic appeal because one seeks a self-image within the representational frame." One's own origin is both real and imagined as the 'formation of the "I" cannot be witnessed by the "eye"' (Phelan, 1993, p. 4-5). The proposition that one seeks oneself in terms of the other and the other in terms of oneself, is differently marked for men and women. Therefore, "when the unmarked woman looks

at the marked man she sees a man; but she sees herself as other, as negative-man. Within the frame of the phallic mark, she sees that which she is not" (Phelan, 1993, p. 17). For *Historia* this process is largely reversed as the two female characters become 'that which is'. Their bodily presence reflects one female character upon the other and as such the formation of the "I" is largely reflected thus, woman can indeed "be". The male characters, however, offer only fragments of dialogue and memory, created through Zosia's speculation, and as such their origin is largely imagined. They are denied dominance, thus becoming "other", the seen but the not seen by the "I/eye". In *Historia* where female doubleness becomes a recuperation of the Other, in this rewriting of the female body, the Other becomes an image of woman's self, "we who can always find the Other in each other, as a mirror image peering back and offering the gift of self-definition" (Dolan, 1988, p. 90). The body must therefore be seen as a series of processes of becoming as mediated through the social reality of ideologies, rather than a fixed state of being.

Space has been conceived of as woman and time as male. Kristeva (cited in Grosz & Probyn, 1995, p. 181) writes " 'Fathers time, mothers species', as Joyce puts it; and indeed, when evoking the name and destiny of woman, one thinks more of the *space* generating and forming the human species than of the *time*, becoming or history." Indeed, *Historia* can be seen to exemplify this mysterious classification of female as space and of male as time as the two contemporary Sydney women exist in the *space* of the stage, while the two men are envisaged through time (from Krakow at the turn of the century). Irigaray (cited in Grosz et.al., 1995, p. 181) asks "could it be . . . that femininity is experience as a space that often carries connotations of the depths of night . . . while masculinity is conceived of in terms of time?" Similarly, linear narrative as

phallic symbol through the Freudian discourse, equates with the masculine - for what more reason is needed than the phallic explanation that it reaches a climax?¹⁵ This therefore positions the Aristotelian device as a masculine construct, therefore unable to challenge but rather sustaining the patriarchal-capitalist discourse. Furthermore a circular narrative like a feminist approach, which offers an alternative through episodic and fragmented exploration, is feminine as it lingers in space as a receptacle going around and around waiting to be filled with 'truth'. Thus, feminising space seems to suggest the production of a "safe, familiar, clearly defined entity, which, because it is female, should be appropriately docile or able to be dominated" (Grosz & Probyn, 1995, p. 183). *Historia* challenges this perception by positing the female or 'feminised narrative' that uses its space to challenge dominant ideologies - to make the familiar 'experience' woman-as- receptacle seem unfamiliar and confronting. Grosz and Probyn (1995) go on to suggest that:

this use of the body to hedge against the threat of insecure boundaries is all the more evident when the female body is used to produce more abstract or general concepts of space, because . . . in these instances there is not even an acceptable edge or mappable boundary. (p. 183)

What Janaczewska creates is a controversial and flexible space, postmodern in nature, enabling Zosia and Zoe a place to inhabit, to re-tell their stories and to re-create the men's lives through speculation.

For Descartes the body operates in a dual state which assumes that there are two distinct and mutually exclusive substances: the mind and the body. The body, commonly considered the signifying medium and vehicle of expression by Grosz (1994, p. 6) has also been regarded as a source of interference in, "and danger to, the operations of reason" (Grosz, 1994, p. 5). Dichotomies always polarise, or as Phelan terms, 'mark'

¹⁵ I am not endorsing this Freudian position as I do recognise that women can also climax.

one classification so it becomes privileged over the other, which remains suppressed. Most relevant for Grosz (1994, p. 4) is the "correlation and association of the mind/body opposition between male and female, where man and mind, woman and body, become representationally aligned." Anzieu (cited in Grosz, 1994, p. 27) sees the repressed of today to be the body, that is "the sensory and motor body. In the era of the third industrial revolution, the revolution of information, nuclear energy and the video, the repressed is the body." In the postmodern moment it would seem that the male body is gaining more attention than the female body. As Cranny-Francis (1995, p. 15) writes "reconceptualisations of the male body focus more on its instrumentalisation in the context of contemporary information technologies." She elaborates by suggesting that in the tradition of male cyborg characters in *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984), *Terminator II: Judgement Day* (James Cameron, 1990), and the *Alien* movies by (Scott, 1979; Cameron, 1986 and Fincher, 1992), the male body has been equated with "technology and instrumentality and the female body with nature and receptivity" (Cranny-Francis, 1995, p. 15). So, again, we encounter the representationally aligned dichotomies with the man as the active doer and the female as the passive needy. However *Historia* plays with these characterisations of the conventional thus subverting the dichotomised discourses to reveal the female as the creator through technology, as well as being receptive as the receiver of information.

One of the most popular subjects of recent writing about the body is the effect of technology on late twentieth-century understandings. The revolutionary development of information technologies of unprecedented power and scope challenge us to define the limits of the body. In particular, recent postmodern work explores the disintegration of the body. Grosz and Probyn (1995) explore the increasingly:

blurred boundaries between bodies and machines [which]...suggests that bodies of all genders and sexualities are pressed, under current cultural conditions, to expose their distance from the Cartesian fantasy of the bounded, knowable, normative body. (p. 104)

Historia, too, disembodies the corporeal body. While the cast of *Historia* requires a minimum of four actors – two male and two female, the presence of the two male characters – The Artist and The Anthropologist, are largely absent in corporeality. By this, I suggest that their presence is displaced through the use of fragmented voice, projection and the computer which often gives “the impression that all four characters exist within the electronic world of the computer” (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 256). Because they are characters of the past, and much of their dialogue is spoken in darkness, the Artist and The Anthropologist’s presence remains deferred and displaced while their identities are created through fragmented pastiches of the imagination. Like the female as ‘other’ within society they are forever present though absent.

The hierarchy of coloniser/colonised or master/slave in Janaczewska’s text *Historia* is challenged through this fragmented sense of corporeal disembodiment.¹⁶ If we assume patriarchal discourse to lie with the male as master and the female as slave, then the subversive nature of *Historia* transcends this hierarchy. Feminists have frequently struggled around issues involving women’s bodies. Issues of abortion, pornography, contraception, maternity, reproduction, sexuality and so on, have frequently been cited as a source of women’s oppression and fuelled by dichotomies within Western thought that place the body as negative ‘other’ to the mind. As the male characters remain disembodied, the female body on stage overrides the position of slave. The female body, which is often seen to imprison the mind and psyche, is subverted.

¹⁶ In much post-colonial discourse, the coloniser/colonised is analogous to the master/slave dichotomy.

In terms of sexual difference and the gender inquisition, this raises many questions.

Like other marginalised figures, 'licentious' lesbians are expected to account for their bodies "– for the ways in which they are presumed not to line up with the bodies of 'women' – by the dominant culture" (Grosz & Probyn, 1995, p. 104). Thus, many feminist and lesbian theories of the body take for granted a distance and a disjunction between lesbian bodies and normative femininity (Grosz & Probyn, 1995, p. 104). Grosz and Probyn goes on to say that the identity categories we're so busy deconstructing actually serve the purpose of organising an otherwise chaotic material world. So for Grosz and Probyn (1995):

to begin to explore the question of the body of the decentred postmodern subject requires that we face this dystopian possibility, that we go beyond the utopian terms of previous lesbian writing and theory that has celebrated the lesbian body's distance and difference from language and the dominant culture. (p. 104)

The generalised assumption that one individual of the same-sex relationship adopts the heterosexual requirement of 'difference' through enacting the masculine, hence dominant master role, is explored in *Historia*. It would seem that Zosia exemplifies the dominant position in the same-sex relationship between herself and Zoe. Like Brown's (1994, p. 51) exploration of Prospero, the proof of Zosia's power to order is manifested in her capacity to control not hers, but her subject's sexuality. This is exemplified by Zoe who states "I've made terrible excuses to be with you. Got to go – Martin is wondering where I am – got to go Zosia – get to the door – back on the floor – Too late – call Martin – worried" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 271) and Zosia who threatens to expose their relationship.

Zoe: My tongue slow –
#: Zo! Zoel

Zoe: Shit Martin
 #: Zo, can you come and give me a hand?
 Zoe: Quick! Get dressed
 #: Zo!
 Zosia: No
 #: Zoe!
 Zoe: Hurry up
 Zosia: Why? I've nothing to hide
 #: What's going on in there?
 Zoe: Nothing, darling. Cup of tea?
 Zosia: Hey Martin, guess what Zoe and I are –
 (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 280-1)

Thus Zosia is master over Zoe who is both the slave to her homosexual relationship and enslaved to the dominant ideology of her heterosexual relationship, which places Martin as patriarch hence, Master.

Zosia similarly subverts the ethnic colonised position of slave through her control over the narrative. For Zosia, the computer, a product of capitalist culture, provides a window to the world and like Prospero, Zosia creates like magic - the two male characters. As the men's lives are created through technologies, new discourses of space are created, thus slippage in the correspondence between the 'physical' and the 'real' world and its representation in cyber space is investigated. "The body figures into this slippage, as does identity and desire" (Case, 1996, p. 46). Zosia becomes the coloniser, which projects an ethnic discourse of slavery over Zoe, The Artist and The Anthropologist, as well as a class discourse over the characters. Müller (cited in Case, 1996, p. 78) turns to these types of dramatic practices, adopted along with capitalism, to identify just how capitalist processes are inscribed in performance scripts. Cranny-Francis sees the information super-highway as "not so much a freeway as a toll-way, and that the only people certain to access it will be the toll-paying few" (1995, p. 94). Others, though, will not be untouched by this technology "rather that they will be reconstituted, disembodied and re-embodied in order to fit the demands of a new

technological mode" (Cranny-Francis, 1995, p. 94). As Zosia taps into the computer, through which she seeks her identity, she occupies a space of knowledge and power. Thus, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital as outlined in Brown (1973) sees Zosia dominating the social space and as such, controlling the production of meaning and symbolic value. Zosia is therefore creator, dominator and coloniser. Thus each subject position confirms her as Master.

The Artist and The Anthropologist also occupy this master/slave relationship. The Anthropologist's work entails a colonising of the land. Zosia (in Janaczewska, 1997) states:

In 1914 The Anthropologist is just beginning his English career. He needs a photographer to record his fieldwork, so he invites The Artist to leave Poland and journey with him from London to Australia. (p. 261)

The Anthropologist produces knowledge of other cultures based on 'experience' as a participant observer. Expected to observe and record the land and the people, the Anthropologist, as if writing, records the following. "Fine day. Got up early intending to copy loose fieldnotes into English. Wrote to Professor Browne proposing a monograph about family and sexuality among the Marrinyerri tribe" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 263). Thus, as an Anthropologist his interpretation of the land allows him knowledge and power and as such he too resists the imprisonment of becoming the slave and rather he becomes the Master. He dominates The Artist as the Artist accepts the submissive role of slave. Invited to travel with The Anthropologist he accepts, asked to be the mere visual recorder of The Anthropologist's fieldwork he accepts, expecting love in their relationship he accepts abuse. The Artist states:

And beneath these fleets of southern desert stars,
Your rhetoric of seduction
Prises open my body's sluices,
And I choke

On the gag
Of your tongue in my mouth.

(Janaczewska, 1997, p. 265)

This dominance is also exemplified through their sexual activity which positions the Artist "Face to the wallpaper fruit" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 267) while "Between walls of ribbons, And red – juiced pomegranates Cut open, You bruise me with a kind of violent excess" (Janaczewska, 1997, p. 269). Thus, the Anthropologist becomes the dominant figure in their 'queer' relationship and colonises the Artist.

The concept of the body image dates back to Ancient Egypt, where Grosz (1994, p. 62) recognises that the word *ka* was used to indicate a copy of the human body, a copy which was the invisible but still material analogue of the living being, the soul. "This soul-like double inhabited and animated the material body but was logically distinct from it" (Grosz, 1994, p. 62-3). Unlike the formlessness of the Cartesian notion of soul or mind, Grosz sees the double as bearing "the image of the body, being a ghostlike icon of the subject" (1994, p. 63). The woman is an immaterial ghost. Phelan (1993, p. 6) writes that within the realm of the visible, "that is both the realm of the signifier and the image, women are seen always as Other; thus *The Woman* cannot be seen. Yet, like an ubiquitous ghost, she continues to haunt the images we believe in." Literary doubling in the early twentieth century raised an issue that was of prime concern during this time, the 'woman question'. Writers like Wharton and Gilman, concerned with both their careers as creative artists and their position in society as women, saw not only the privileges but also the imprisonment resulting from the idealisation of women. Sapora (1993, p. 372) posits that in their writing they found many ways to express this feeling of division.

Particularly suited to this representation of division was the technique of literary doubling. Sapora (1993) writes:

Doubles are mysterious and elusive – sometimes seen, sometimes hallucinated; sometimes they are external characters or physical duplicates who share a psychic understanding with the main character, sometimes they take the form of internal personality divisions that make a character behave like two different people. (p. 373)

This instance of doubling exemplifies the subject positions of the characters in *Historia*. The text embodies doubling and re-doubling in a way that explores the position of women and men within those dominant ideologies of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality. As previously explored, the two women reflect a sameness reflected through the “I/eye,” both women are homosexual and brought up in Sydney’s Western suburbs, their doubleness infers the marginalisation of two women in contemporary dominant society. The two male characters remain ‘mysterious and elusive – sometimes seen, sometimes hallucinated,’ reflecting similarities with one another. Both of Polish origin and both gay, their doubling is characteristic of Zoe and Zosia’s. However, the doubling doesn’t end here. Furthermore, both Zoe and The Anthropologist are ‘bisexual’ and can conform to the dominant ideology, while Zosia and The Artist remain homosexual only. In the doubling and re-doubling *Historia*, like Churchill’s reproduction of historic women in *Top Girls* (1991), suggests a cyclical nature that implies things haven’t changed a great deal for those minority groups. Turn-of-the-century Poland merely reflects the condition of homosexual, ethnic relationships in contemporary Australia. Thus, Janaczewska’s *Historia* is explicitly political in the sense that Sapora suggests “from ancient myth, primitive folklore, early philosophy, and religion, the doubled or divided character has appeared as a metaphor for people’s feeling of division – from themselves, from their society, or from their culture” (1993, p. 373).

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

"We had to leave our past behind, my mother tells me, we had to choose between history and an uncertain future . . . For me, the past isn't fixed; it's changing all the time, and I want the space to re-write my own history." (Janaczewska, 1996, p. 101)

Janaczewska's *Historia* successfully interrogates the dominant ideologies that maintain a hegemonic society through the classifications of ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality. Through representation Janaczewska exemplifies the experience of 'being' woman and also the repressive mechanisms that oversee the exploitation of 'being' an ethnic, homosexual woman of the working class, marginalised within society. Having not only been excluded from history but also contemporary life, *Historia's* characters are endowed with a voice to speak out against ideologies that are so often presented as 'natural'.

Through the medium of theatre *Historia* embraces theories of production that allow the theatrical regime to become a powerful ideological force capable of challenging accepted power mechanisms set so firmly in place within society by the patriarchal and capitalist discourse. Converging feminist and theatrical ideas in ways which align form with content, Janaczewska uses elements of Brecht's epic theatre to explore the class structures, by alienating the audience to effect change. She also embraces the postmodern discourse, which interrupts the stable construction of identity

to represent the fragmented, shifting psyche to which identity can no longer be fixed. Instead of aspiring to complete those projects men are incapable of perfecting for themselves, female practitioners in the theatre are beginning to question the goals and desires of knowledge production with the aim of destabilising them and making possible other kinds of writing, knowing and experience. Such women's writings hold a dual role; they deconstruct dichotomies of man and woman, centre and margin, in so far as they dismantle and destabilise hegemonic units of 'being,' to instead re-construct entities, transient and multi-dimensional in nature to make aware 'new' alignments of ideology: This subversion of existing knowledge's relies on the assertion of unrecognised or repressed contributions by the female, ethnic and homosexual body. Cixous (cited in Grosz, 1989) states:

If woman has always functioned 'within' the discourse of man . . . it is time for her to dislocate this 'within,' to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it into hers, containing it, taking it into her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of. (p. 234)

Janaczewska's theatre, like other women practitioners, becomes an "adaption of theatrical forms offer[ing] a crucial means of identifying the expression of feminism in Australian theatre in the 1990s" (Tait, 1994, p. 1).

Historia can be seen to explore the minority experiences of class and ethnicity, sexuality and gender to exemplify and challenge the repressive mechanisms in place within societies. Through a re-reading of these dominant positions Janaczewska deconstructs the accepted 'norm' of culture to reveal layered experiences of oppression.

As Hélène Cixous explains on behalf of feminist practitioners (cited in Tait, 1994):

If I go to theatre now, it must be a political gesture, with a view to changing, with the help of other women, its means of production and expression. It is high time that women gave back to the theatre its *raison*

d'etre and what makes it different – the fact that there it is possible to get across the living, breathing, speaking body . . . (p. 4)

Thus, through the placing of live entities, that is the homosexual corporeality, the woman, the immigrant and the working class, within the sphere of the stage, male heterosexual desire is subverted through the male gaze, as are patriarchal and capitalist ideologies. As such 'Woman' can begin to "be" not only "seen" but rewritten into *Historia*.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW WITH NOËLLE JANACZEWSKA
CONDUCTED ON 13 JUNE 1998 IN SYDNEY
BY NICOLE KELLY

- NK Birthplace**
NJ London, 1955
 "Other places in my work are very much a fiction."
- NK Parents names and backgrounds**
NJ Both parents live in England. Mixed backgrounds, "a whole lot of different things – Eastern European, Celtic, Polish."
- NK School – Public or Private**
NJ State school – government not private, "mixed not comprehensive. In England, public school means private school."
- NK Places lived**
NJ "Lots of places. Mostly in Oxford and London, Germany, France, Melbourne, Blue Mountains, Sydney." Came to Australia in 1986.
- NK Work**
NJ Oxford studying (BA), London (Masters) – mostly professional in Sydney.
- NK Relation to Polish and other communities**
NJ "I am mostly interested in the kind of reality of contemporary Australia and the reality of urban Australia, but also country towns and that reality is culturally diverse. I'm not so much writing to explore my own cultural background because I actually think my writing style is influenced partly by the experimental theatre tradition of Central Eastern Europe, particularly Strauss and Henke. Not Anglo-American tradition but not performance art either, it is very much influenced by my English education. It's that kind of valorisation of the literary. I have had contact with other communities, particularly those community oriented areas of contemporary inner Sydney."
- NK Are you involved with any professional associations? Ethnic or other**
NJ "Not in any ethnic associations but I'm a member of things like the Writers Guild, development agencies like Playworks, the National Australian Playwrights Association, AWG Union ... a bewildering array of associations and unions."

NK Interest or involvement in other arts

NJ "I like prose, poetry, radio ... quite a lot of radio. I get quite a bit of inspiration from the visual arts but I don't practice this at all. I am also influenced by music especially."

NK How does your own background fit into your work? Are you a "multi-cultural" writer?

NJ "Like I explained about the traditions of theatre, I think this is information rather than a genetically determined predisposition, I think that can be seen in the sort of theatre I write, like from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Russia that part of the world. But I also really like some of the more recent Asian forms of theatre. I spent three months in Vietnam studying Vietnamese theatre. I'm interested in forms that blend the traditional and the contemporary rather than focusing very much on the pure and traditional forms like Kabuki. I'm quite interested in the kind of bastardised and mixed forms. These ancient forms offer something that English speaking forms do not and that is another attraction of the Central European theatre, that it will play with conventions a little bit."

"I don't like the categorisation of being a multi-cultural writer because I'm not multi-cultural, I consider myself an Australian and I think that to be an Australian can mean to be all sorts of things. It can be those from an Anglo background, indigenous Australians and it can be Vietnamese and those from hybrid backgrounds. There are many different cultures so I prefer to avoid labels like multicultural because I think you can be confined to your own ghettoisation. This is not to imply that I am colour blind and multiculturalism is not something important to talk about, but I think labelling someone can be very restrictive."

NK What was the first theatre piece you saw?

NJ "I have no idea, I can't remember ... probably some sort of horrible pantomime, some sort of ballet school or perhaps something on ice even."

NK When did you begin writing seriously?

NJ "The early eighties. In England the companies were collective with lots of sketches and bits of everything that were developed collaboratively. I liked the writing, but I don't know that at this stage I was totally serious about it. I suppose it's really only in the last twelve years that it's become something more and increasingly so in the last seven or eight years."

NK Where did you learn your methods for writing and what are they?

NJ "I didn't learn them in any systematic way, I just sort of picked them up over the years as a result of putting on shows, reading things, thinking about things. I think I was just trying to find the best possible vehicle for the ideas I wanted to explore. The method depends a bit on the nature of the project. My projects are a lot more meandering and eclectic; I deliberately try not to determine the transformations my work may take. Although, on other occasions I have started at the beginning and written straight through to the end. However, most of my writing is very idiosyncratic, there's not really a method that I follow. Often it's more of a scavenging, eavesdropping and wandering around, walking around and thinking and particularly dreaming."

NK What narrative and theatrical forms do you use to tell your stories?

NJ "A whole range. I suppose the form gets determined a bit by the type of project and visa versa. I have an interest in exploring language, not necessarily in English but language itself and the power of language. Narratives that cross time and place, narratives that are rarely linear, where the past can be more real than the present and a blending of past and present, memory and reality, of I guess the fantastical and the real."

NK Why do you work in theatre? What is the virtue of theatre as a medium?

NJ "There's something about the power of live action on stage and the audience. It is one of our most enduring community moments, where people come together to share an experience. I like its spatial and visual factor, and its collaborative nature."

NK You seem to stress the importance of bilingualism in your work. Can you explain?

NJ "Again I guess it comes back to the fact that I want to represent my reality, and my reality is culturally diverse. Often I'm walking down the street here and I hear music and voices in different languages and its this that I want to put into my work. There is also something inherently theatrical about the act of translation, it is performative in nature."

NK Do you draw your theatrical representations from theory? For example feminist, queer, postcolonial.

NJ "No, I really don't believe that you write with theory in mind. I think my work is fringed by various ideas but I don't think gee I'm going to write a play about a particular subject so I will go and read a whole lot of theory, though I will come across things and read them. I think that to follow that line of thought stifles creativity."

NK You seem to focus on identity and the search for – why is this?

NJ "I suppose in a kind of pluralist society like Australia that those are big questions which affect other countries and nations."

NK Who are your characters and who are they trying to become?

NJ "it depends on the play. Sometimes when I am creating characters they are voices. In Historia I ended up with four characters because when the play was first developed I was told I could have four actors. Because I have a background in anthropology I had these two male characters stored away in my mind. Then I created two female characters because I figured that would be what they would give me, two male and two females. That's really how those characters came about."

NK How do you see your work in theatre in relation to various quests in search for an Australian identity?

NJ "That's a big question. I think one of the attractions about theatre is that it can offer something that mainstream media and other forms can't. I don't believe that theatre can change the world, but theatre can put forward different points of view or the complexities of things in a way that television rarely can. Theatre can explore contradictions, depth and complexities."

NK What effect do you hope to make on the spectator? What do you want them to take away from one of your plays?

NJ "I want them to enjoy it. I want them to have an experience that isn't akin to one they would have watching television, a film or reading an article in a magazine. I want them to have something theatrical and it's also about ideas. I think at the moment a lot of people are so led by commercialism and what the public want that they reduce everything to its lowest common denominator. Theatre is one of the ways that ideas can be explored in a more complex and sophisticated way. So, I hope that people go away from my work not only with an emotion but perhaps with a more philosophical thought, and become more engaged with ideas that might be unfamiliar or provocative in some way."

NK Do you have a particular audience that you want to reach yourself or do you find that you can range across audiences?

NJ "It depends a bit, I mean some plays are obviously written for certain audiences, like some plays I have written have been for high school audiences ... But I like to reach as wide an audience as possible, and diverse an audience as possible. I'm not just writing for the kind of audience a bigger theatre company prescribes, I hope to reach a wider audience than that."

NK Do you think women are disadvantaged and what are the obstacles for Australian female playwrights?

NJ "Well I suppose to a degree yes. I think there are some fantastic women writers, but for most theatre companies the artistic directors are men who commission men to write about being men and that is the sad fact of it. Even in Sydney, the areas where women were well represented in the community and youth or were offered positions as artistic directors, in the last eighteen months or so they now all have male directors. Nothing against those individuals, I generally have a high regard for them but I just think it's an interesting shift. There is that classic thing where many interesting books have come out about English women playwrights and they talk about the Tarafricanisation of theatre and how that has impacted upon women. Personally I don't want to see another play about four junkies and a squat in Newtown. I mean if you think of the kinds of plays that have been held just recently say by the young British and Irish writers like Caryl Churchill and her plays you just don't see, we are seeing only plays by men. I think we have quite a good climate where somehow that's okay to do that, where a few years ago there was more pressure on companies to represent the constituency a bit more because the majority of audiences are female. But I sort of think if you look at the amount of women writers, there are fewer women getting produced and women writers are often in the kind of project which is self funded through a co-op doing work in that way."

NK Even in the 1990s there are restrictions upon women entering the public domain of political debate or engaging with a range of issues. Are we still being told what issues we're allowed to talk about?

NJ "I don't think we are being told what to do but in that public domain like Cheryl Kernot's private life, which has been gone over with a fine tooth comb in a way that doesn't happen to anyone else. I don't think we are being told what to write any more than what male writers are, I think the better funded companies like

the main stage ones will say look this is a hot topic we want plays about this or that is in vogue. I mean I don't know what it is like in WA, but certainly there is a shift on Broadway and Westend. A lot of them are getting work from plays on Madrid or Rome – so they are getting work very much from a very small corner of the globe. But you have to write what you have to write."

NK Would you call yourself a feminist writer in any way?

NJ "I really don't like those sorts of labels. I am a feminist but I hope my writing is not just that. I think my work is certainly often prioritised as a female perspective on the world. I mean it's that classic thing where if a man writes a play about a Father and son the theme would seem universal, but if a woman writes it, it becomes a domestic and this is very unfortunate."

NK How far would you say your work is feminist or your experiences as a woman informs how you write?

NJ "Yes I think it does, inevitably. But it's not the only influence."

NK Can you predict what might happen for Australian women artists in the future?

NJ "No, I wish I could! (laughter). No unfortunately not, I mean I think the situation of arts funding is difficult. There is so much interesting writing coming from women playwrights and I hope more of it gets produced more widely and this includes males work that is also so interesting and bold."

NK Sexuality plays a major role in *Historia*. Can you explain this? Have you caught much flak from it?

NJ "On the whole I think particularly in Sydney, people are quite used to this, I mean this is the home of the Mardi Gras. They are fairly comfortable with sexuality, I suppose I want to show that sexualities are actually complex, that we are not simply this or that and that they shift and change. Again it's an anti-label sort of thing, but it also addresses multiculturalism and we also need to look at cultural diversity and the conservative views of the family and sexuality, particularly female sexuality. And also there is this same assumption that everybody is tied to some happy, jolly, extended heterosexual family until someone said well look there are happy gay and bisexual people in those communities too. With *Historia* most audiences agreed it was very good. There was that initial shock with the first 'cunt' word, but because it was a double bill with a play by an Aboriginal playwright who used 'fuck' a lot, the few times I used it were not offensive. The audience was really good and no I didn't really cop a lot of flak at all."

NK Were you happy with the response to *Historia*? (Your response?)

NJ "I think there was that notion after the show of wishing there were things done differently. The production had some limitation not because of the actors, but partly because of being double billed with another play, which was a really good play as well, but the two weren't really suited. The two together were a bit strange."

NK What do you think of the fairly recent phenomenon of queer or homosexual theory?

NJ "I am aware of the theory, but I really don't read much theory. And when I do it tends to be the more kind of oblique or idiosyncratically written aspects of it. So yes, I am aware of aspects of it but when I write, I write because there are things I want to explore not because of any particular theory. And I am interested in that intersection of ethnicity and sexuality."

NK **What do you enjoy most about writing plays?**

NJ "I really like the process of writing, I like researching and I do a lot of research in various forms. I really enjoy that process of gathering, scavenging, eavesdropping, going to places and I just really like the process of writing. I also like the process of the work when it gets to rehearsals and people start coming in."

NK **What do you find most difficult about writing?**

NJ "For theatre? Getting production."

NK **Have you always been interested in the multi-mediums of production that are exemplified in *Historia*?**

NJ "Yes, I think that like with Barry Kosky, writing for the theatre is not just writing something that television could do better and that involves using visual images and it can be very simple, it doesn't have to have projections but there is something spatial, dynamic and live about theatre and you have to engage with that."

NK **Would you like to talk about the subjects of your plays?**

NJ "Some have been to do with aspects of the translation of English which 'The History of Water' particularly focuses upon. The plays that have been commissioned were commissioned mainly for the community show, so there were twenty five people performing in it, which I adapted for the auditorium version and it was specifically to do with young women of non-English speaking backgrounds and issues of cultural well being and health. The 'Marie Currie Chat Show' was also about women and time, 'Yungaburra Road' was a piece about violence, 'Slowianska Street' I wanted to write a requiem. I feel a concern for life in contemporary Australia, in all its kind of glory and grime. I guess I also write a lot about science or the history of science, like for 'Madagascar Lily' I learnt a lot about the history of botany, as its about a tropical hothouse in a botanical garden."

NK **Have you had problems convincing directors, actors, stage managers to employ your structures?**

NJ "No. What I write is probably not every actors/directors cup of tea, but the kind of directors that want to work with me obviously like my work and most actors are interested in the same way. I have generally had good relationships and not a lot of problems in that area."

NK **As an artist what questions do you ask yourself?**

NJ "I don't know if I can really answer that. I suppose in writing you have a sense of where might this go on? I guess I am very conscious at the moment of my recent work as they have rather large casts of six or seven, which I guess is not

really that big but larger than my other plays, so I am very conscious of needing to complete something with two actors like 'The History of Water'."

NK **What are you working on now?**

NJ "A number of things. I have a play in first draft, which has a more linear narrative in the way that it keeps going back to the start, which is about different cultural notions of love. It's kind of a courtroom drama and really about how the law does or doesn't deal with issues of cultural difference. I am also working on two companion pieces called 'Connie, Kevin and the Secret Life of Groceries.' Also another piece about Lithgow and illegal immigrants. I kind of work on them in blocks so an hour here and another hour there."

NK **Who has influenced you most as an artist?**

NJ "A lot of poets, music, particularly twentieth century. I'm interested in folklore and myth. I admire work by Kantor, Dylan Thomas, Strauss, John Donne, filmmakers like Oozo, detective fiction and even shows like Seinfeld. Things that stimulate my imagination can also include public transport which shouldn't be underestimated – it allows me to eavesdrop, listen and dream."

NK **In what ways do you feel that your work as a playwright has evolved?**

NJ "My skills as a dramatist are a lot better, also my craft skills are better and more theatrical."

NK **What has your work as a playwright taught you? How does it inform your teaching?**

NJ "Well at the moment I'm not teaching and I haven't done so for about two years. I find universities awful places for artists, though I guess they are okay for academics – in the long term. I guess you learn to work collaboratively. You don't let bad reviews stop you from writing, you have to write what you have to write. I don't believe in formulaic writing, I trust intuition. Overall I suppose, I have learnt to work with people and to let in different ideas, but at the same time you must also decide what you want to write."

APPENDIX B

NOËLLE JANACZEWSKA'S MAJOR CREDITS & EXPERIENCE

Categories of work

Feature Film, Television, Stage, Radio, Children's Theatre, Theatre for Young People/Community Theatre, Script Editing/Dramaturgy, Assessing, Translation – French

Major Credits & Experience

Stage

Cold Harvest 1998

Historia 1996

The History of Water/Huyen Thoai Mot Giong Nuoc 1992-96

Shoreline 1989

Crossing the Water 1989

Theatre for Young People/ Community Theatre

Madagascar Lily 1996-97

Yungaburra Road 1995

The Marie Curie Chat Show 1994

Blood Orange 1992-94

Tick a Box 1992

Black Lagoon 1990

Radio

Think Like a Fish 1996

The History of Water 1994-96

Fieldnotes 1992

Crossing the Water 1989

Awards & Prizes

Short-listed for Susan Smith Blackburn Prize (the first Australian to ever do so) 1998

Short-listed for ANPC/New Dramatist Award 1996

Nominated for AWGIE (Theatre for Young People) 1996

Certificate of Commendation: Australian Human Rights Award (Drama) 1995

Short-listed at the Berlin Prix Futura (Radio Drama) 1995

Short-listed for the NSW State Library Awards (Script Writing) 1994

One of the winners of the London New Play Festival 1994

Category B Fellowship from the Literature Board of the Australia Council 1993

Winner of the NSW Performing Arts Scholarship 1992

Writer's Project Grant from the Literature Board of the Australia Council 1991

APPENDIX C



7 Malinowski with S. I. Witkiewicz, about 1902

(Ellen., Gellner., Kubica., & Mucha, 1988, p. 75).